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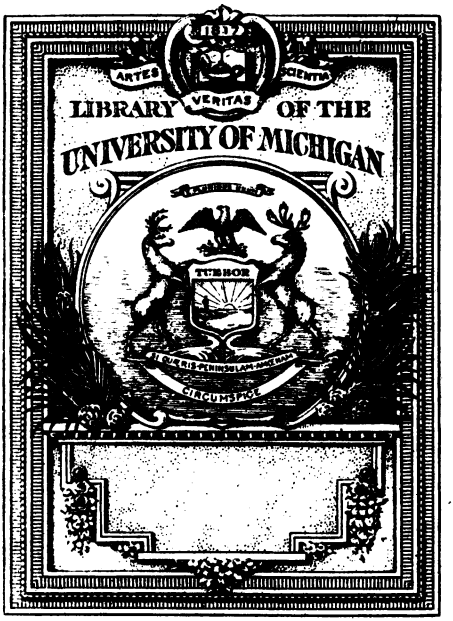
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SIMPLE TALES:

BY

MRS. OPIE.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

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SECOND EDITION.

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MOTHER AND SON.

EMILY Villars, an almost portionless, but very beautiful orphan, had long been the idol of the men and the envy of the women in a large country town in ———shire; when Mr. Melbourne, then high sheriff for the county, saw her at an assize ball, and was so captivated with her beauty, that in a short time after he made her an offer of his hand; which being readily accepted, he set off for London directly, in order to make such preparations for their marriage, as were worthy his fortune and the merits of his intended bride.

In the mean while the happy Emily and her happy uncle, a thoughtless and dissipated, but kind-hearted man, who had been to her at once a guardian and a parent, were the constant theme of conversation in the town of ———. Some of their friends, at a large party, kindly insinuated, that Mr. Melbourne's going to London had a suspicious appearance;—for why could he not have *sent* to order all he wanted? Another lady, after vainly endeavouring to establish it as a fact, that a very terrible hereditary disease was in Mr. Melbourne's family, observed with a sigh, that such disproportionate matches seldom turned out well: while a disappointed father, who thought his daughter quite as handsome as Emily, observed, that he did not think Mr. Melbourne's fortune was as large as was supposed; and his wife kindly added, "Whatever it is, Miss Villars can *spend* it, I dare say."

Still, whatever envy and disappointment might suggest, every one believed that Miss Villars was about to be most fortunately married; and, to use an expression which I have often heard with disgust from the lips even of youth and beauty, every one thought that she had made a very good *catch* in the matrimonial line.

Meanwhile, the fair object of these kind remarks was looking forward with delight to her apparently smiling destiny, and was preparing, unconsciously to herself, to realize the fears of some who loved, and of many who envied her.

True—Mr. Melbourne had youth, a fine person, elegant manners, and an immense fortune; and so captivating was he in appearance, that Emily, as she saw him ride into town with the judge beside him in his carriage, could not help wishing herself the wife of so charming a man. But in every respect but fortune, Emily was his superior; and, however splendid

may be the possessions of a man, and however specious his manners, unless his heart, temper, and disposition accord with those of the woman he marries, she will soon find, if she has sense and sensibility, that her proudest mansion is but a gorgeous prison, and that the envied idol abroad may be a hopeless wretch at home.

Emily Villars united to youth and beauty, quick talents strong sensibility, and a heart deeply susceptible of kindness and equally susceptible of injuries. Whereever she loved, she exacted ardent love in return; wherever she paid attention, she eagerly expected it; and this disposition, which, to a husband by whom she was beloved, and whom she tenderly loved, would have been the charm and cement of their union, was the likely means to make her life unhappy with a husband of sluggish affections and of fashionable indifference.

Mr. Melbourne was a man of the world, a man of intrigue, and a man of fashion. He loved to have the smartest carriages, the best horses, and the handsomest mistress in London; and at length a new caprice and vanity urged him to wish to have the most beautiful wife; therefore when he saw Emily Villars, and deemed her the most beautiful girl that he had ever seen, he resolved to marry her. He did so, and looked forward with delight to the gratification which his pride would receive the ensuing winter from the homage which would be paid to her charms in London: and while Emily's delighted guardian gave her to him at the altar, rejoicing that he had lived to see his niece's happiness secured, he was far from suspecting that he had united her to a man who had too little taste to value or cultivate her talents; too little sensibility to delight in the almost morbid extent of her's; and to whom her beauty,

splendid as it was, would soon cease to be of great importance, except as the means of triumph to his vanity.

After a residence of some months at their country-seat, and a long tour through Wales, during which Emily observed in her husband an insensibility to the beauties of nature which ill accorded with her ardent admiration of them, they repaired to the metropolis, and took possession of a large and magnificent house in Grosvenor square, where Emily was soon introduced into all the gayeties of modish life.

Emily was new to the world, and particularly so to the fashionable world—Hence, when she gave her hand and her heart to Mr. Melbourne, she imagined that not only the wish, but the opportunity of future conquest was gone for ever; and that whatever admiration her beauty might excite, it would be silent and respectful—admiration such as she might

observe without a blush, and her husband without a frown. But she soon found that she had been mistaken; for she beheld herself as much the object of particular attention from men of all ages as if her hand and heart had as yet been undisposed of: and, to her infinite surprise, she saw that Mr. Melbourne observed it not only without alarm, but with obvious pleasure. Nor could she behold his tranquillity on these occasions without uneasiness, as she had always considered jealousy as a necessary attendant on real love; and therefore she sometimes feared that Mr. Melbourne's tranquillity might be the result of decaying affection: but ever ready to flatter herself, she the next moment attributed his *sang froid* to his confidence in her virtue; and being convinced that he would never have reason to deem his confidence misplaced, she gave herself up to the enjoyment of universal admiration, and eagerly pursued the gay career which

Mr. Melbourne had thoughtlessly encouraged her to begin. But her gayety was soon interrupted by a very unwelcome discovery; namely, that Mr. Melbourne was as truly a man of high ton as those who made her the object of their homage. She found that, if men of fashion admired her, women of fashion admired her husband; and that if she did not inspire jealousy in his bosom, it was most decidedly the inmate of her own.

At first, her feelings, never under the control of her reason, vented themselves in tears and sullenness; and instead of enjoying the attention paid to her wherever she appeared, she was employed in watching the attention which Mr. Melbourne paid to others: till, having observed that his vanity was gratified by the visible jealousy which she could not help betraying, and that he beheld with cold conceit the torments which she endured, wounded pride conquered the pangs of apprehensive af-

fection, and she resolved to be as fickle and as indifferent as he was.

At this moment, this important moment, a new lover was added to her train; a man whose admiration could instantly raise the object of it into the idol of the day, and who had the reputation of never having sighed in vain. He was celebrated also for never having lost any conquest which he had gained. He continually forsook, but had never been forsaken. Even Mr. Melbourne lost all his wonted tranquillity and confidence in his wife's attachment to himself, when he saw her the object of Colonel Dorville's attentions; and in his turn, spite of his pride, he became watchful and suspicious.

But, alas! these symptoms of affection were now exhibited too late:—He had sported with Emily's feelings, with Emily's pangs; and she had learnt to disregard his. He had weaned her heart from him by wounding her pride; for he had delighted in

exciting her jealousy by marked attention to other women: and above all, he had set her an example of infidelity.

"At length," said the deluded Emily to herself, "my hour of revenge is come! and the husband who wantonly threw from him the heart that was wholly his, shall feel in his turn the pangs which he inflicted." In vain did she recollect that Mr. Melbourne's disinterested love had raised her from obscurity to distinction: she had learnt to think that her charms might have procured her a higher rank in life, as lords and dukes had offered her their vows of homage, and made her look on the love of Mr. Melbourne as a tribute due to her excelling graces.

Still, when she uttered her threats of revenge against Mr. Melbourne, the emotion which made her voice falter, and her lip tremble, proved a degree of pique towards her husband which showed that all love for him was not extinguished: and had he, following the impulse of his

heart, confessed his past errors and his present jealousies, their union might perhaps have been cemented again. But Mr. Melbourne's jealousy unfortunately showed itself in bitter sarcasm and a sort of proud defiance; and while he angrily interfered to prevent the now increasing levities of his wife, he seemed to have no consciousness of the culpability of his own conduct.

But whatever may be the ill conduct of a husband, cruelly deluded indeed must that wife be who thinks his culpability an excuse for her's, or seeks to revenge herself on her tormentor, by following the bad example which he sets her. She is not wiser than the child, who, to punish the wall against which he has struck his head, dashes his fist against it in the vehemence of his vengeance, and is himself the only sufferer from the blow.

All chance for the recovery of the lost happiness of Mr. Melbourne and his wife,

was not, however, entirely over. Emily was on the eve of becoming a mother; and as the appointed time drew near, a thousand new and delightful sensations throbbed at her heart, and promised "to wean her from the world she loved too well." She had always been fond of children; and the hope of having a child of her own awakened all the long dormant sensibilities of her nature; and even Mr. Melbourne was regarded by her with kindness and complacency, as the father of the anxiously expected offspring.

Mrs. Melbourne had resolved that her confinement should take place at the country-seat, that she might be attended by an old and favourite practitioner in the neighbourhood; and Mr. Melbourne was eager to promote the execution of this plan, in order to remove her from the dangerous society of colonel Dorville. Into the country therefore she hastened: and while looking forward to the joy of

being a mother, she bore without repining, the temporary reclusion to which she was for a time obliged.

At length she gave birth to a son and heir, which was warmly welcomed both by Mr. Melbourne and his family; and in a succession of virtuous and pleasing occupations, arising from maternal love, the joys of vanity and the giddy delights of the world were for a time forgotten; and had Mr. Melbourne condescended to be a sharer in them, this unfortunate, but truly lovely and fascinating young woman, might still have been the pride of her husband and the idol of his family. But Mr. Melbourne, too fashionable to bear to be supposed enamoured of his wife, soon relapsed into his usual inattention, and would have been a stranger at home had not colonel Dorville unexpectedly taken up his residence in the neighbourhood.

Too proud to appear jealous, Mr. Mel-

bourne instantly waited upon him, and invited him to his house, and colonel Dorville instantly accepted the invitation; nor could Mrs. Melbourne see without resentment, that her husband, as if wholly indifferent to the care of his honour, had thought proper to introduce as his guest into the house, the man whose attentions to her had been too marked to be misunderstood, and who was universally known to be as successful as he was daring.

But she soon lost all inclination to blame this strange step of Mr. Melbourne, when she found how much the society of colonel Dorville added to her happiness; when she found all her wishes anticipated by his eager, yet respectful attentions; when his delighted eye was fondly fixed on her as she lulled her infant to sleep on her lap; and when his lips breathed forth half-uttered accents of admiration and tenderness, while she de-

voted herself to the most vigilant attendance on her child at a time when it laboured under a severe indisposition; and when he anxiously sat by the side of the sick infant, while its inattentive father was enjoying the noisy pleasures of the chase: beside, the man who thus shared her anxieties, and soothed by his attentions the wound inflicted by the neglect of her husband, was one whose graces excited the admiration of all women, and the envy of all men;—and this captivating being lived but upon her smiles, and wished to exist only as long as he was dear to her! Nor, master as he was of the art of dissembling, did colonel Dorville on this occasion express more than he felt. He was seriously in love for the first time in his life; and his passion was likely to be a lasting one, if any passion that has not esteem for its basis can be allowed to be durable in its nature.

To be brief; while Mr. Melbourne, with

seeming calmness, but real anxiety, was, lest he should appear jealous of his rival, madly exposing his wife to the seductions of a practised libertine, that unhappy wife was listening to those seductions; and, strange to say, while she drew in with greedy ears his flatteries on her maternal tenderness, she was gradually preparing her mind to admit of her unnatural desertion of that child, her care of whom made her appear so amiable. Such are the inconsistencies of human feeling and character.

At this dangerous moment, the uncle and former guardian of Mrs. Melbourne became a bankrupt, and Mr. Melbourne refused to assist him in any other way than by allowing him a small annuity for life; and that only on condition that he should retire into Wales, and not disgrace their state by his poverty when they came down to their family seat.

This conduct, this *conditional* kind-

ness to a humbled individual, and her near relation, and one whom she so very tenderly loved, irritated her already excessive sensibility almost to madness; and her feelings were rendered still more painful by the intelligence, that the broken-hearted old man, being obliged by poverty to accept Mr. Melbourne's ungracious bounty, had, as soon as he arrived at his retreat, given way to a destructive habit of drinking spirits in order to banish care, and that he had brought on disorders which threatened to be fatal.

Emily immediately implored leave to hasten to her uncle, but her husband refued to grant it; nor indeed, as she was a nurse, was such a journey desirable for her: she then entreated Mr. Melbourne to go himself; but this he positively refused; and she was weeping over the forlorn and unattended state of her exiled relative, when colonel Dorville insisted on going to him himself; and having obtained a letter of intro-

duction to him, he set off for Wales, with the blessings and thanks of the grateful Emily.

He arrived time enough to attend the last moments of the dying man, and to deserve, by his patient attendance on him, his thanks and prayers. He closed his eyes, he followed him to the grave with all the grace of seeming piety, and then returned to London with a quiet conscience to seduce the nearest relation of the man whose dying breath had blessed him, and to make his kindness to the uncle the means of ruin to the niece.

Mrs. Melbourne received him with every expression of gratitude and affection; and in proportion as this kind action raised colonel Dorville in her estimation, her husband sunk in it;—for, oh, how different had his conduct been!

At length Mrs. Melbourne was convinced by her seducer's arguments, that it was right to leave the husband whom she

could no longer love and esteem; but she conditioned that her child should be the partner of her flight: this, she, however, was soon convinced was impossible, as Mr. Melbourne would have a right to seize it, and take it away from her wherever she was. She therefore found that she must either give up her infant or her lover; and having in a moment of fatal weakness given him a claim on her, to repent and retract was now impossible; till at last she became convinced that it was her duty to be the companion of him whose happiness depended on her, and to leave the man whose happiness was wholly independent of her: and in a rash and evil hour she left that infant whose sick couch she had bathed with her tears—that infant, whose life her watchful tenderness had preserved, to the mercy of hired servants, and eloped to the continent with her fascinating seducer.

At first Mr. Melbourne's grief, though

he concealed it from every eye, was deep, and promised to be lasting; but, eager to dissipate it, he joined a party to the Hebrides, while the prosecution for a divorce was pending, and his little boy was left at nurse in the neighbourhood of his family seat. In a few months after, his marriage with Miss Villars was dissolved by act of parliament, and he married a second wife, not so young nor so beautiful as his first wife, but in rank and fortune superior to himself.

As soon as the divorce took place, Emily expected that colonel Dorville, according to his promises, would marry her: but she found with agony and indignation, that nothing was further from his thoughts, though he was passionately devoted to her, and though he had taste enough to value her for those talents and accomplishments which had been wholly thrown away on Mr. Melbourne.

This refusal on his part, and expecta-

tion on hers, proved a constant source of contention between them; nor was this ill-starred and guilty union cemented by a family. Vain were all their wishes on this subject—it was not allowed to these children of error to taste the pure joys of paternity: year succeeded to year; and the child whom Emily had abandoned was old enough to ask questions concerning his mother, and still she had no second child; while Dorville and Emily were soured and disappointed.

"Alas!" said Emily to herself, "I have a child—and what would I not give to behold him once more!" and while her heart fondly yearned towards him, she felt in the bitterness of her soul, that in her regrets for the loss of her child Mr. Melbourne's injuries were well revenged.

At length colonel Dorville, who since the elopement had resided on the continent or in Ireland, was called to England on busi-

ness; and Emily accompanied him, fully resolved to obtain, if possible, a sight of her deserted son. Accordingly she contrived to gain intelligence concerning him and Mr. Melbourne; yet all she could learn was, that there was no child at the town-house, but it was believed that there was a little boy at the country-seat. "He lives, then!" exclaimed Emily to herself, "and I may yet see him!" and immediately taking advantage of colonel Dorville's being gone some miles out of town, she set off for ———, and concealing her face in a long thick veil she ventured to leave her chaise, and set off on foot for the environs of Mr. Melbourne's seat.

But the agony of the moment when she first caught a glimpse of that house where she had lived respected and beloved, and where she had first known the transports of a mother, was so overwhelming, that she sunk prostrate on the

earth ; and her heart, her proud and indignant heart, by its incessant throbs, proclaimed, but too late, that it was not formed to endure with patience and contentment the consciousness of crime and of disgrace.

As she approached the lodge, she saw faces entirely new to her at the door of one of them ; and taking courage, she asked who lived at that fine house, and whether the family was down ?

" The family is not down," was the answer.

" But is there no one of the family down—No child or children ?"

" There are no children by this lady—There is one little boy by the first."

" By this lady ?—Is Mr. Melbourne married again ?"

" Oh, yes—and, belike, madam is not fond of children, for poor Master Aubrey is sadly neglected by her and his papa, and I don't think the squire sees him above twice a year."

She said no more; for the conscience-stricken Emily sunk down in a swoon at her feet, and it was some minutes before she recovered to misery and recollection. "I—I have over-walked myself, I believe," said Emily, liberally rewarding the woman for her attention. "But, pray, go on;—you were saying something of the little boy, little Melbourne,—Where is he—at that great house?" for she had determined, if possible, to carry him off with her, as she found he was of so little consequence to Mr. Melbourne's happiness.

"At the great house! No—God bless you! he is better off—he lives with our young vicar, Mr. Evelyn, who was struck like to see the poor child so forlorn, so he asked leave to take him, and he is as kind to him as if he was a father; nay, much kinder than his father is to him, I am sure."

"Evelyn!—Evelyn!" cried Emily, turning very sick, and ready to faint again,

"what Evelyn?—Is his name Augustus?"

"Yes, that's his name, sure enough."

Emily made a violent effort, and walked out of sight of the woman; then, throwing herself on the grass, she burst into a convulsive flood of tears. In the pride of her youth and her beauty, she had sported with the happiness and trifled with the affections of Augustus Evelyn, then a humble curate. "Wisdom and truth were all he had;" and now Emily, in the bitterness of her soul, regretted that they had not been all to her.

This man she had treated with disdain, even while her heart owned his virtues; and while still continuing to give him just hope enough to prevent despair, she had married another. Yet this injured but amiable being had proved a father to her child when his own father had neglected and she had deserted him! and Emily could not help fancying that humanity was

not his only motive, but that he felt that Aubrey was her child: and when she recollected the virtues, talents, and learning of Mr. Evelyn, she could not help exulting in the thought that he would make her son as excellent and as distinguished as himself. If so, should she attempt to take him away with her? When accident, or rather Providence, had made such ample amends to her child for the loss of his natural protectors, should she prove herself an unnatural parent again, and blast the fair prospect which was at length opening around him? Every feeling of conscience and duty forbade it; and summoning up all the energy of her soul, she vowed to let her child remain under the precious care and tuition of Mr. Evelyn. Then, more satisfied with herself than she had been for years, she set out to watch for a sight of her poor forsaken child. Sometimes she thought of calling on Mr. Evelyn; but this, pride

forbade; she could not bear to appear before him in her degraded state. She could not bear—but to analyse all her feelings when she thought of Evelyn, and of seeing him, is impossible; suffice, that she resolved not to go to the parsonage, but wander about it as long as she could do so unperceived. She had not wandered long, when she saw a little boy attended by a servant in livery,—in Mr. Evelyn's livery,—and her heart throbbed almost to bursting. She followed them; they were going to a fair, she overheard the footman say, about a mile off; and forgetting all fear of being known, she determined to walk with them.

What a strange, undefinable sensation did Emily experience when she first heard the sound of the child's voice, and fancied it was her own son! It was he; for she heard the footman call him master Aubrey, and then master Melbourne; and as she gazed on him, she felt so proud—so

rich! But he was pale, and he seemed feeble, and alas! her conscience whispered her, that for want of a mother's care his infancy had been neglected. Still, there was a sweetness of expression in the little Aubrey's face, that struck every one; and as Emily heard some passers-by commend his beauty, she could hardly help exclaiming, "It is my child!"

At length they reached the fair; and the delighted Aubrey, child-like, longed for all the pretty things that he saw; while his mother beheld with unspeakable agony, that her son, and the heir of thousands, and who, had she remained the wife of his father, might have indulged all his little whims and wishes, was now obliged to be contented with what a solitary sixpence could procure him. This distress was a foolish one, but it was natural. It was better for the child that he should not have more money to spend; and so Mr. Evelyn thought: but Emily felt as

if his disappointment was owing to her guilt; and unable to bear the longing looks which he gave the toys and sweets after his slender pittance was expended, she accosted him, and in a faltering voice told him he was such a sweet boy, that whatever he wished to have she would pay for.

"Thank the lady, master Aubrey," cried the footman; and the child, with the smile of a cherub, as Emily thought, looked up in her face, smiled, and said "Thank you, ma'am."

It was too much to bear—her child had spoken to her—had thanked her—had thanked the mother who——The thought was insupportable; and Emily, turning away, hurried through the crowd to indulge her tears. When she returned, she found Aubrey with his hands full of toys; and as soon as he saw her he came running to her, crying, "May I have all these?"

"Oh, yes!" replied Emily—"but will you kiss me for them?" The child put up his pretty mouth to her directly, and Emily kissed him so fondly, and so often, that the child struggled to get free.

At length, being loaded with toys and sweetmeats, Aubrey wished to go home and show his treasures to Mr. Evelyn; and Emily followed him till they came near a path leading to the parsonage: there she stopped—it was the last time that she should see Aubrey again for many many years perhaps; and unable any longer to control her emotions, she begged the footman to stop one moment; then kneeling down, she clasped her arms round her child, wept over him, and blessed him. "Take this," she cried, "and keep it for my sake,"—(giving him her watch and seals,)—"and you, young man," she continued, addressing the servant, "tell your master, that the lady who gave this watch to master Melbourne, thanks and blesses

him, and humbly hopes that he will continue his fatherly care and instruction to him, and try to make him in every respect like himself." Then folding the astonished boy in a last embrace, she made the best of her way to her chaise, and in a tumult of contending emotions was conveyed back to London. The next day, colonel Dorville returned with her to Ireland.

When Mr. Evelyn saw the little boy returning loaded with toys and sweetmeats, he eagerly ran out to meet him, and inquire how he procured them.

"Oh, sir," replied the footman, "a lady bought them for master Aubrey, and she gave him this fine watch too, and bade him keep it for her sake:" and here he stopped, for Mr. Evelyn had seized the watch, and seeing E. V. on one of the seals, was convinced that the child had seen his mother; and his frame shaking with emotion, he continued

gazing on the seal, and inattentive to every thing else.

At length, he shook off the feelings that oppressed him, and was going to ask more about the lady, when the footman said, "And, sir, the lady sent a message to you."

"To me!" cried Mr. Evelyn, starting.

"Yes, sir—she said, she said——lack-a-daisy, what was it? do you know, master Aubrey?"

"She said I was a sweet little boy," answered the child.

"No, no, that was not it; she said, Tell your master that I thank and bless him, and beg him to keep master Melbourne, and make him as good a man as himself: Aye—no, that's wrong,—and make him quite like yourself, sir."

"Did she, did she say so?" cried Mr. Evelyn, hurrying into his study, and shut-

ting the door after him. But almost instantly re-opening it, he called the footman and the little boy in.

"But did she not call herself by any name?" asked Evelyn.

"No—but I think she must be near akin to master Aubrey; for she kissed him, and cried over him, and blessed him so, I declare I never see'd any thing of the like before—it was quite moving, she took on so."

"Was she not very beautiful?" said Mr. Evelyn.

"Ye—yes, she was a likely woman enough; only you see, sir, she was so very pale, and her eyes looked a little red or so, from crying so much."

"But was not the tone of her voice very sweet?"

"Why, as to that, I can't well say, sir, for she was a little hoarsish, as one may say, from taking on so; and she sobbed as it may be so——" Here he

imitated a sob; but Mr. Evelyn did not think it could be at all like Emily's sob. However, there was no doubt that she it was who had accosted her son, and sent the message to him; and so strict were Mr. Evelyn's principles, that, finding how strong the emotion was which this circumstance excited in his usually well-governed mind, he rejoiced that she had not paid a visit to the parsonage: but still more he rejoiced to find that she had still some of the feelings of a mother; and from that hour, he taught the little Aubrey, in his prayers for his father, his friends, and fellow creatures, to pray for his mother also.

But the unexpected appearance of Mrs. Villars, as she now called herself, so near his habitation, unsettled Mr. Evelyn's mind for some time. He had made the servant and the child describe minutely all she said, looked, and did; and the little Aubrey was endeared to him by

having been the means of procuring for him his once-loved Emily's thanks and blessings. He was pleased to think that she knew he had the care of her son: and as the thoughts of happier days thronged to his remembrance, he could not help saying to himself: "Ah! had she married me, she would never have been guilty! I should have loved her so truly, so devotedly, she could not have had the heart to leave me:—but Mr. Melbourne, a gay, faithless husband——" Here he paused, shocked at his own want of principle; for he found that, seduced by the whisperings of still powerful affection, he was seeking to excuse an adulteress.

But to return to Mrs. Villars:—

The sight of her child, by awakening in her bosom every dormant particle of maternal tenderness, and creating there a constant craving for his presence, did not tend to reconcile her to the disgrace-

ful situation in which her guilt had placed her; and uneasiness of mind had such an effect on her temper, that she drove from his home, to seek the consolations of company and the bottle, the man for the enjoyment of whose society she had violated the most sacred ties.

Nor was it long before colonel Dorville, from the indulgence of the vice of drinking, became an object of disgust to her; and their domestic scenes were daily embittered by mutual reproaches, and regrets that they had ever met. But their disputes usually ended in Emily's urging colonel Dorville to make her his wife, and his positively refusing, declaring at the same time, that the passionate love which he still felt for her as a mistress, would vanish entirely if he gave her the chilling name of wife.

I will not dwell on the years of domestic wretchedness which now succeeded to each other; during which, Mrs. Villars

had reason to suspect that colonel Dorville, spite of his fondness for her, a fondness which not all their quarrels, and her change of temper, could destroy, was addicted to low amours, and by that means gave the finishing blow to the faint affection which she bore him: and it was at length with a sort of sad vindictive pleasure that she reflected she was not his wife, and was at liberty to leave him.

At this time, a young man about her own age became a constant guest at their house; his name was Lorimer; and his manners, mild, elegant, and insinuating, formed a striking contrast to those of colonel Dorville's riotous companions. Lorimer had also taste and talents, and there was a degree of pensiveness, almost amounting to melancholy, in his appearance, which, Emily soon discovered, her society and her smiles alone had power to remove. Nor was it long before she discovered that Lorimer loved her, and not with

a passion founded on the hopes of success which her situation gave him, but with a degree of timid respect which proved the delicacy and sincerity of his love.

Some circumstances, not worth detailing, at length, however, emboldened Mr. Lorimer to declare his affection, and Emily received it without displeasure;—for, so liable are we all to self-delusion, that she saw no additional crime in loving another man, as she was colonel Dorville's mistress, not his wife; and the consequence was, that, being roused almost to madness by some reproaches of colonel Dorville, ending, as they commonly did, with the vainglorious taunt that he defied her to leave him, for that no woman yet had ever had resolution to do that, she resolved to accept the offered protection of Lorimer; and, as reputation was lost to her for ever, endeavour at least to find quiet and contentment.

No words can do justice to the frantic

rage of colonel Dorville when he found that she was gone; and his only consolation was the hope of vengeance: but of this hope he was soon deprived. Aware of his violence, the lovers left the kingdom immediately, and changed their names. They did not indeed go abroad absolutely to avoid colonel Dorville's resentment; the delicate state of Lorimer's health made their residence in a warm climate desirable; but, as any agitation of mind had a dangerous effect on his health, Lorimer wished to spare himself a rencontre with a man whom he was too ill to meet in the field.

Abroad, and undisturbed, they remained several years; and such was the constant attention which Mrs. Villars paid her sick lover, that his mother, a woman of high rank, but not of very scrupulous morals, wrote to thank her for her care of her son; and kept up a regular correspondence with her. This circumstance,

and the unabated affection which Lorimer entertained for her, led Emily to imagine probable, an event in which all her hopes were fixed. She wished, she hoped to become the wife of Lorimer, and to lose in that respectable title the constant memorial of her misery and her frailties.

She had also another motive independent of decided esteem and affection for him, which prompted this desire. She had always earnestly wished to be known to her son; but as a mistress, she felt that she should never dare to solicit him to see her; as a wife, she knew that she should be more courageous, especially if she was raised by her husband to the rank of a viscountess, as she well knew the power of rank and title, even over the virtuous and the wise; and had often seen women noticed on account of their situation in life, by those who would have turned from them with disdain had they only been of the same rank as themselves.

And this rank, this purifying rank, Lorimer had it in his power to bestow on her; for on the approaching death of his father he would be a viscount; and Emily's heart throbbed with delight while she imagined it possible, that as lady Cardonnel she might hope to be pressed to the heart of an affectionate child!

Little did she know the heart of Aubrey Melbourne, little did she do justice to the virtues of his preceptor: she knew not, that one proof of real penitence, one repentant tear, one agonizing and remorseful sigh from his unhappy mother, would have more weight with Aubrey Melbourne, and the pupil of Mr. Evelyn, than the imposing sound of a title and the pomp of situation; that his mother, convinced of the error of her ways, would be more welcome, poor, destitute, and forlorn, to his bosom, than if she stopped at his door in her carriage, and presumed

to hope for that respect from rank, which he had been accustomed to pay to virtue only.

Emily continued to hope, and Lorimer, by his expressions of gratitude and love, to keep alive those hopes; when an express arrived informing him that his father was no more, and Mrs. Villars saw her lover at last lord Cardonnel!

But while she was daily expecting that he would offer her in reality the title of wife, which he had so often given her in their hours of domestic happiness, lord Cardonnel received another letter sealed with black, and she observed him to be violently agitated on the receipt of it; while, contrary to his usual custom, he did not make her acquainted with the contents of it. Immediately a sick feeling of fear and jealousy took possession of her heart—a feeling prophetic as it were of those which succeeded it; when, after

keeping her in suspense three days, lord Cardonnel summoned up resolution to address her as follows:—

"Your kind attentions, my dearest Mrs. Villars, and your long and faithful affection, have so tenderly endeared you to me, and your many charms and talents render you so worthy to grace any situation in life, that it was once my hope never to be parted from you again."

"*Once* your hope!" exclaimed Emily, turning pale.

"Yes, *once* my hope; for, sorry am I to say, that hope is gone for ever!"

"For ever!" cried Mrs. Villars, and sunk fainting on the sofa. When she recovered, lord Cardonnel, as delicately as possible, told her that the woman of his heart, the woman whom he had loved from childhood, had been forced by her father to marry another, though her whole soul was devoted to him, about two years before he became acquainted with Emily;

that his spirits having been greatly depressed by his unhappy attachment, he had diligently courted Mrs. Villars's society, because he found that she only had power to dissipate his gloom; and the consequence was, an attachment to her nearly as powerful as his former one had been. That, hopeless of ever possessing the object of his first love, he had resolved, to offer his hand to her whose kind attentive care had certainly prolonged his life, and in whom he had found a companion whose society was the charm of his existence. But that since his father's death he had received a letter from the brother of his Amelia, enclosing a few lines from herself, informing him that she was a widow, and that, if he remained faithful to his first affection, she was willing to bestow herself and a very considerable fortune on the man of her first affections.

"I thought," added lord Cardonnel, "that my tender attachment to you, my

dear Mrs. Villars, had closed my heart against any other impression whatever; but this letter from Mr. Morley, and a few lines traced by a hand once so very very dear to me, acted like magic upon my feelings: I again saw Amelia torn from my arms, bathed in tears, struggling in the cruel grasp of her imperious father, and forced reluctantly to the altar with a man whom she detested. I lived over again the agony of that moment, and then I recollected that I held in my hand the proof of the faithful attachment of that beloved girl, and that I was at liberty, after years of separation, to make her mine for ever."

"Say no more, say no more, my lord," cried Mrs. Villars in a voice of suppressed emotion, "obey the virtuous dictates of your heart, for virtuous they are. How can I, the guilty, fallen, disgraced Emily Villars, bear for an instant a competition with the pure object of your first love?

She, who was a tender mistress and an irreproachable wife—she, and she only deserves you; go and reward her tried affection! while I endeavour to expiate my crimes by lonely penitence, and bless the gracious Being who thus in mercy chastizes me."

"Emily, dear Emily," cried lord Cardonnel, trying to clasp her to his heart, "talk not thus, I beseech you."

But Mrs. Villars avoided his embrace, and with an air of repelling dignity replied, "My lord, when shall we set off for England? From this time, we are, I trust, friends for ever—but lovers no more." And the very next day they began their journey homewards.

As soon as they landed, Mrs. Villars insisted on lord Cardonnel's leaving her, that lady Maynel might not have the pain of hearing, that, though returning to marry her, he came attended by a mistress.

"And now, and now," thought

Emily, "I will see him once more, and then, never, never see him again!" The idea was dreadful. Though remorse, and an ever upbraiding conscience, had forbidden her to be happy with lord Cardonnel, still, as she had by the constant practice of every domestic virtue merited his esteem as well as affection, the respectful tenderness which he consequently felt for her, and openly testified, had restored her in some measure to a little, though a very little, self-complacency; and therefore the prospect of being again left to the horrors of unsoothed, unmitigated remorse, was a blow, independent of her disappointment, which almost overwhelmed her reason: besides, she thought that, had she become a wife, as I before observed, she could have ventured with some courage to implore her son's countenance and affection. But now a discarded mistress, and forced to owe her

support to the lover who discarded her, how could she bear to solicit an interview with Aubrey Melbourne!

Still, she could no longer exist without some intercourse with him; and the first moment that she set her foot on the shores of England, Evelyn and his precious charge met her eye in fancy, wheresoever she turned; and in the hope, though distant, of beholding the lovely boy grown up into the accomplished man, she sought consolation for the loss of lord Cardonnel.

On leaving her, his lordship hastened immediately to the house of Mr. Morley, where lady Maynel was; but he desired Mrs. Villars to expect his return on such a day. That day however arrived, but lord Cardonnel came not, nor wrote; and after enduring a state of suspense and expectation for two days more, Mrs. Villars was painfully surprised one morning, by being

formed that lady Cardonnel wished to speak to her.

"Lady Cardonnel!" exclaimed Emily, starting from her seat, and fancying that lord Cardonnel was already married, and that his *bride* was below:—but recollecting herself, she concluded that it was his lordship's mother who wished to see her, and she desired her to be introduced.

Lady Cardonnel, a woman of high fashion, in dress, manner, and in morals, entered the room with the freedom of an old acquaintance; and, running up to Emily, kissed her in a most affectionate manner, and told her she had really longed for the pleasure of being introduced to her.

Emily blushed, and recoiled from her new acquaintance almost with disgust. She felt that *she* could not have courted the acquaintance of *her* son's mistress; that *she* could not have affectionately embraced the guilty companion of a child of

hers; and though bent down by the consciousness of her own frailty, she could not have endured to know that her son was living in an illicit connection.

Not noticing her confusion or her coldness, lady Cardonnel, pressing her hand, exclaimed, "Now I see you, Mrs. Villars, I do not wonder at my son's constant attachment to you, nor at the jealousy of a certain person." Emily started, and lady Cardonnel smiled, and went on thus:—"I dare say you expected to see Cardonnel instead of me?"

"I did, indeed."

"And he was coming, I assure you; but lady Meynel, by dint of interrogation finding out whither he was coming, threw herself into hysterics, and vowed that if ever he saw you again she would never see him more."

Emily turned very pale and faint, but she begged lady Cardonnel to go on.

"For my part," continued lady Cardon-

nel, "I wished my son to take her at her word, and see you again, in order that he might see her no more, for I assure you he has changed for the worse; time has not laid so gentle a hand on lady Meynel as it has done on *you*, Mrs. Villars; the advantage is all on your side, believe me."

"Lady Meynel has one advantage over me, madam," replied Emily with mournful solemnity, "which she herself and lord Cardonnel ought to prize beyond all others."

"And what is that?" asked lady Cardonnel with surprise.

"Innocence!"

Lady Cardonnel looked still more surprised, but said nothing; she only patted the top of her snuff-box, and smiled with great meaning: then exclaiming, "You are a dear, comical, solemn soul," she went on with her story.

"Cardonnel, poor dupe, thinking lady Meynel's hysterics a proof of the tender-

ness of her heart, and not of the irritability of her temper, promised not to see you again for some time to come; but told her, he owed you so many obligations that he must be allowed to visit you occasionally, and pay you the attention and respect which you deserve; and I, in a desperate rage, told him he would be a nasty ungrateful wretch indeed if he completely sacrificed you to a woman who might not perhaps love him as well as you did. I protest I thought she would have killed me! and *innocence*, my dear Mrs. Villars, was, as personified by her, so monstrously ugly, that Cardonnel must have a terrible taste if he thought it made lady Meynel at that moment prettier than you. I heard no more; for a 'my dearest Amelia,' from Cardonnel, pronounced in a tragedy tone, made me quite sick, and I ran out of the room. In a little while he came to me, and told me that he had pacified the tigress, as *I* call her, and she had con-

sented not to exact a promise that he should never see you more, on condition that he did not keep his appointment and come and see you *now*: therefore he desired me to call on you, and I am come to express to you in person, how much I and our whole family think ourselves obliged to you for that attentive care, that incessant watchfulness, to which lord Cardonnel protests he owes his life."

"I claim no merit, madam, for what I did," said Emily: "lord Cardonnel's life was then necessary to the comfort of mine."

"You are a charming creature!" answered lady Cardonnel, "and I am sure my son would have been much happier with you for a mistress, than with tigress for a wife; and upon my word, my dear Mrs. Villars, if Cardonnel should venture to visit you now and then, I am not sure that we shall not see the viscountess Cardonnel arraigned for wilful murder!"

"Believe me, madam," gravely re-

plied Mrs. Villars, "that lord Cardonnel will not visit me now and then; for I have a greater objection to receive his visits than lady Cardonnel can ever have that he should pay them, and it was my fixed resolution to see him only once more, when we last parted:—prudence and propriety both forbid us to meet."

"Alas, poor Cardonnel!" cried his mother. "However, my dear, that gentle, sweet manner of yours makes me endure prudence in you, though I could not bear viragoish insolence—innocence I mean—in lady Meynel, and I commend your delicacy and discretion. And now for business. As lord Cardonnel's mother, I conjure you to accept this as a faint testimony of the sense which his whole family has of what he owes you." So saying, she laid a parchment on the table, and telling Emily she should see her again, she kissed her cheek, ran down stairs, jumped into her carriage, and drove away.

Mrs. Villars opened the parchment, and found it a deed of settlement on herself for life, and to so large an amount that she was ashamed to acccept it. But in vain did she write to lady Cardonnel on the subject; all remonstrance was vain; and Emily wished, though she dared not expect, that, some day or other, her son would enable her to exempt herself from this painful pecuniary obligation.

Eleven years had now elapsed since Dorville (now general Dorville) had mourned the loss of Emily, the only woman whom he ever really loved; and still no second attachment filled up the void which she had left in his heart, nor had time at all alleviated the resentment which he felt against her for having left him, and at the same moment given a mortal blow to his love and his vanity. Indeed the blow to the latter was so great, that Dorville, fearing to encounter the raillery of his acquaintance, over whom in

affairs of gallantry he had so often triumphed, rarely frequented the societies of which he had once been the ornament; and, a prey to disappointed passion and pride, he sought refuge from his feelings so often in intoxication, that the once fascinating seducer was now lost in the bloated midnight reveller; and while in the morning, with shaking hand and almost tottering knees, he lounged along the streets of Dublin or London, a mournful example of premature decay, at night he rose from table armed with false fire, to kill at the theatres or the opera that time which he could no longer enjoy; and then returned to the tavern to lose his yet remaining reason in drunkenness, and to be carried to bed lifeless as the clod of the valley.

One evening while he was carelessly lounging in the lobby at Drury-lane theatre, a lady, whose face was nearly hidden by a long veil, passed him

hastily, and by her air and form reminded him of Emily Villars,—of that woman whom he had for years vainly wished to see, and reproach with her perfidy. The bare suspicion that the lady whom he saw was Emily, roused him from the debility of drunkenness, and left him only its irritation; when, just as he was going to follow her, he overheard one gentlemen say to another,

"Did you see that woman?"

"Yes,—who is she?—She is very beautiful."

"Ah! she is beautiful still, though turned forty. It is Mrs. Villars, as she calls herself, the divorced wife of ——."

Dorville staid to hear no more; but, rushing through the lobby, he overtook the unhappy object of his search just as she was going to enter a very elegant carriage. Then, seizing her rudely by the arm, regardless of every one present,

he dragged her back into the lobby; and, while pale and trembling she shuddered in his grasp, he loaded her with the bitterest revilings, and called down curses on her head. At last his passion grew so outrageous, and even her life seemed so much in danger from his violence, that she exclaimed in terror, "Oh, Heavens! is there no one who will protect me?"

"I will, though I die for it," exclaimed a pale, sickly-looking young man, darting through the gathering crowd, and receiving on his arm the blow which the half frantic Dorville was aiming at his trembling victim.

"You!—poor stripling!—you!" cried Dorville (foaming with passion as the determined youth endeavoured to force her from his hold,)—"'Sdeath, sir! who are you? and by what right do you interfere?"

"By what right!—what right!" echoed the young man, apparently struggling to keep down a variety of indignant feelings

labouring in his bosom; while, agonized by contending passions, Mrs. Villars earnestly gazed on her pale and agitated champion. But Dorville, again grasping her arm with cruel violence, renewed his abuse of her, and his threats of her defender.

"This is too much to bear," cried the youth: "Villain! unhand her this moment! or dread——"

"Dread what?" replied Dorville with a sneer: "dread the force of thy arm, thou puny hero?"

"General Dorville," replied he, approaching him and speaking in a very low and faltering tone, "you reproach me with the weakness of my frame:—know, sir, that my feeble infancy was robbed of a mother's care; a villain lured her from my father's arms!"

"What is that to me, sir?" exclaimed the general: "you are an impertinent, meddling scoundrel, and I demand satisfaction!"

"You shall have it, sir," returned the stranger: "I will meet you when and where you please."—Then in a distinct but faint voice he added, "My name is Aubrey Melbourne, sir."

At the sound of that name, Dorville started back with horror and consternation; and Mrs. Villars, uttering a loud and dreadful shriek, sunk down in a swoon at the feet of her deserted child.

"Mr. Melbourne!" cried general Dorville, "any other man I could meet, but you,—no—no—it is impossible!" So saying, he rushed through the crowd and disappeared.

In the mean while some women who were passing administered remedies to Mrs. Villars; and young Melbourne, straining her fondly to his bosom as she recovered, said in a whisper, "He is gone—he has left you to my care; and with my consent, I will never, never part with you more!"

"Oh! my child! my child!" cried

Emily, hanging round his neck, "how little I have deserved——"

"Hush!" replied he: "this is no place for conversation; let me remove you hence."

At this moment a servant appeared, saying, "Mrs. Villars's carriage stops the way;" and Melbourne immediately hurried her through the crowd: but drawing back with a tone and gesture that spoke daggers to the heart of his mother, he exclaimed: "No—I cannot enter that carriage;" and ordered it to drive off. Then, seeing his own at some little distance, he assisted Mrs. Villars into it, and jumped in after her himself.

He found his mother had relapsed into a state of insensibility; and the carriage had reached his house, and she was laid on the bed in the apartment formerly her own, before she recovered to a consciousness of her situation.

A loud and agonized shriek on her recovery proclaimed that she recognised

her long-deserted apartment; but at this moment of horror and remorse, her pious and affectionate child presented himself before her.

"Am I not in a dream?" she cried: "can I, can I be in——" She could not go on.

"You are in your own house," he answered, kissing her hand; "you have been dreaming, and the dream has been a long and painful one; but it is past, and you now wake, I trust, to real happiness!"

A tide of various and discordant feelings rushed in upon the conscious mother, almost too weighty for her to endure and live. "My child! my child! can you—can you forgive me?" she exclaimed.

"Forgive you! do you expect a very implacable judge in the pupil of Mr. Evelyn? Would he were alive to see this day!"

"He is dead, then!" faltered out Mrs. Villars; and for several minutes they were both too much oppressed to speak.

At length Melbourne, recovering himself, endeavoured to divert his mother's attention by telling his own short story.—He told her, that on his father's death, who had no children by his second marriage, he had found himself uncontrolled master of a large fortune, and had resolved, if possible, to find his mother, and lure her back to the paths of virtue;—that her change of name had misled him in his pursuit, and he had nearly given over his search as hopeless, when the same chance which acquainted Dorville that the lady who passed him in the lobby was Mrs. Villars, informed him that it was his long-lost mother; and he followed her nearly as soon as Dorville, but was impeded in his progress by the crowd.

"But now," he cried, "I have found you, and we part no more: for, O my mother! if there be any ties that are likely to separate us—for your

sake; for my sake, break them, I conjure you!"

"Whatever had been my ties," returned Mrs. Villars, blushing, "this moment should have for ever annulled them; but lord Cardonnel, for whom I left Mr. Dorville, is just married, after having made for me an ample provision for life."

"Which now you can restore to him untouched," eagerly interrupted Melbourne, "as all my fortune is at your disposal, and general Dorville will not, I trust, trouble us with his visits."

It was then settled that Mrs. Villars should reside with her son at his country-seat, and orders to prepare for their leaving London were immediately issued.

In a short time Mrs. Villars saw herself once more mistress of the house where she had given birth to her son, and where also she had madly deserted him; while

the image of her once-fond and deeply injured husband incessantly haunted her; and her heart being torn by mixed and contending emotions, it was a long time before she could prevail on herself to leave her room, or even let into her apartment the light of day. At length, however, the soothing attentions of her son, and her consciousness that her repentance was not only agonizing but lasting, restored her in some measure to composure; though, while she contemplated Aubrey's pale cheek, and the delicacy of his frame, she reflected with the most painful self-reproach, that, had she not forsaken him, he might have been as healthy as her anxious affection wished him to be. *Happy*, she thought, he might still be; at least as happy as the consciousness of a mother's disgrace could allow him to be: but she soon perceived that he was not happy, though he always professed him-

self to her to have no wish ungratified, now he had found his mother.

"*A quelque chose le malheur est bon*," says the proverb; and the truth of this young Melbourne had experienced: though the cruel desertion of his mother had exposed his frame to many dangers, and his health to serious injury, it had been the means of benefiting his mind.

Mr. Evelyn was the vicar of the parish, a young man (as I have before observed) of exemplary piety and virtue, and who was indeed, in his practice, the village preacher so admirably described by Goldsmith; and having always beheld with compassion the little Aubrey Melbourne's deserted infancy, he soon began to love him not only for the child's sake, but for the sake of his mother; and when he was old enough to learn, he took such pleasure in instructing him, that he gave him daily lessons at his own house.

Mr. Melbourne had suffered his son, on pretence that the country was good for his health, to remain at his nurse's cottage, even after he was old enough to demand the attendance of a preceptor; but at length, being ashamed of his neglect, he sent orders for Aubrey's removal to a public school. But against this Mr. Evelyn warmly remonstrated; and as he at the same time offered for a small sum to take him into his house, and undertake to fit him for college himself, his objections were attended to, and his services accepted; and Aubrey Melbourne became in consequence the happy inmate of the parsonage.

Nor was Evelyn less happy to receive the child under his roof than he to come to him—for was he not the child of Emily Villars!

"Dear child, I will be a father to you!" cried Evelyn, catching him to his heart; and as he said so, tears of mingled

pleasure and pain trickled down his manly cheek.

Not many months after, the circumstance of Emily's visit to —— took place; and her watch and seals, being in the custody of Mr. Evelyn, were deposited in his cabinet with a lock of her hair, the only memorial of her which he had allowed himself to keep; and some of my readers at least will not be surprised to hear, that Mr. Evelyn took care to wind up this watch every night. True, he did not want to use it; but he persuaded himself that it was good for the watch, and he did not choose to examine his motives very narrowly.

From the day on which this watch arrived (as I have before observed) he taught Aubrey to remember his mother in his prayers; and also foreseeing that the peculiar circumstances of Mrs. Villars's situation might one day call for some instances of exertion and forbearance on the part of

her son, he took great pains to impress on Aubrey's mind the highest sense of filial duty, and to convince him that no unworthiness on the part of a parent could exonerate the child from the most scrupulous observance of the virtue of filial piety, and that no sacrifice for the sake of a parent ought to be scrupled by a virtuous child.

These lessons sunk deep into the heart of young Melbourne; and when Mr. Evelyn informed him of his mother's situation, told him the story of her visit to ——, showed him her gift to him, and, in short, told him all particulars relating to her—after the first burst of indignant sensibility had subsided, he felt a sort of romantic ardour to find her out, and endeavour to reclaim her; and while he asked his nurse, who lived near him, to tell him every particular of his infancy, and to inform him of all the instances which she could recollect of her fondness for him, he se-

cretly vowed to be to her an affectionate protector, whenever the obscurity in which she was involved should by his exertions, be removed.

But filial love was not sufficient to shield his heart against the admittance of a tenderer passion; and just before his father died he had learnt to sigh in secret for the daughter of a very opulent man who resided on an estate which joined to Mr. Melbourne's.

Most men, when they become possessed, as Aubrey Melbourne did as soon as his father died, of an ample fortune, would have supposed themselves worthy to address the daughter of any man not superior in rank; but such was Aubrey Melbourne's diffidence of his own merit, such his painful consciousness of the sickliness of his appearance, that though he had considerable personal attractions, and a mildly interesting grace of manner peculiar to himself, he dared not make known

his affection to the object of it, from a conviction that he was doomed to sigh for her in vain. But his attachment was too visible to escape the eyes either of the young lady or her father, and each beheld it with delight; and Mr. Ellesmere, in expectation that young Melbourne would soon be the declared lover of his daughter, received very coldly the proposals of a gentleman for her, not quite equal to the former in present possessions. But Melbourne would never have had courage to declare himself, had not a little circumstance occurred which at once unveiled the state of his own heart to Miss Ellesmere, and made her heart known to him.

One evening that he was drinking tea at Mr. Ellesmere's, a busy and prying neighbour came in and congratulated miss Ellesmere on her approaching marriage. Clara blushed, and Aubrey Melbourne turned pale; while the lady went on to mention as the happy man

the lately rejected lover; and Melbourne, deeming Clara's confusion as a confirmation of the report, suddenly fell back in his chair, to all appearance dead.

Terrified beyond every consideration but that of Melbourne's danger, miss Ellesmere rent the air with her screams; and while remedies were administered to the insensible youth, her arm supported his head, while her warm but trembling lip was ever and anon pressed to his cold temples; and when he at last recovered his senses, her eye met his with an expression of joyful but tearful tenderness, whose meaning not even he could mistake.

"Dear Aubrey!" said Ellesmere, "what was it that overset you thus?" Aubrey blushed, and turned his fine eyes full of meaning first on Clara, then on the officious neighbour, and slowly left the room. Ellesmere followed him; and as he was mounting his horse, declaring himself unable to stay, he shook him by the

hand, and whispered him, "I see the state of your heart; and my girl is yours both heart and hand; let us see you tomorrow to dinner, and if you can bring her to confession I hope before long to have the honour of calling you son-in-law."

This abrupt but welcome declaration almost overpowered the weak spirits of Melbourne, and, bursting into tears, he could not for a few minutes recover his speech; but pressing Ellesmere's hand, and uttering a 'God bless you!' from the very bottom of his soul, he hastened home, not to sleep, but lie and meditate on his happy expectations.

The next morning, before he rose, an express from London arrived, sent by his agent there, whom he had employed to endeavour to learn some tidings of his long lost mother; and the messenger brought a letter informing him that she had been seen in London at the theatre in a private box, and alone, at the repre-

sentation of 'The Stranger;' and that there, probably, he would see her himself. This was information to put all Melbourne's virtue to the test. It was his duty, he thought, to set off immediately in search of his deluded parent; but then a dearer duty called him to Mr. Elsemere's: then again, on the contrary, how could he venture to go thither and contract an engagement, inconsistent perhaps with the sacred duties which he was about to enter upon with regard to his mother?

These various and discordant duties and feelings agitated him for some time: at length filial piety conquered, and he contented himself with writing a hasty note to Mr. Ellesmere, and one evidently bearing marks of great agitation of mind; informing him that sudden and important business had called him to London, and forbade him to profit, at present, by the welcome and flattering assurances which Mr. Ellesmere had given him: and hav-

ing dispatched this note he set off for the metropolis; where, at the theatre, during the temporary absence of the friend, who knew his mother personally and attended Melbourne in his search, chance discovered her to him, and produced the scene described in the foregoing pages.

The circumstances which attended that scene had deepened very powerfully the interest which Aubrey Melbourne had long felt for his unhappy parent. I am well aware that what we call *natural affection* is chiefly in human beings the result of habit, and a series of care, tenderness, mutual kindness, and good offices: still, Melbourne had accustomed himself so long to think of his mother as an object of interest to him during his future life, had so often heard his father's neglect blamed as the cause of her delinquency, and had had his mind so imbued with her idea by Evelyn, that his heart was prepared to receive her with the tenderness of

a child; and when he beheld her terrified and insulted by the fatal cause of all her disgrace, and saw himself at once her protector from danger and from insult, her power over him became immediately secured, her ascendancy irresistible; and, following the impulse of his feelings, he carried her in triumph to his own house, nay promised to consider her as its mistress, and never to part from her again, before he recollected how little such an arrangement and such a promise suited his attachment to miss Ellesmere, and his hope of being united to her.

It was not till he had taken leave of his mother for the night, that the image of Clara, and what had passed between him and Mr. Ellesmere, occurred to his recollection; but then it recurred with all its force, and chilled with agony the glow of self-approbation and happiness which had so lately flushed his pale cheek.

He had just sworn to his mother that

she should henceforward be his constant companion; that his presence should always fortify her against any future lapse from virtue; and his time be devoted to the welcome task of reconciling her to the virtuous details of a life of privacy and active benevolence. Yet, though he had done this, he knew that he was bound in honour to solicit the hand of miss Ellesmere; and he also knew—dreadful consideration to the heart of a son!—that his mother was not a fit companion for his wife! He saw himself, therefore, under the mortifying necessity of depriving his mother of the consoling situation which he had promised her, or of resigning all hope of possessing the woman whom he loved!

And to which decision did virtue urge him? Could the mother who had violated all her duties to him, to society, and to her husband, deserve that he should sacrifice to her the virtuous affection of his heart, and perhaps the happi-

ness of the woman whom he loved?—Surely not. And he could make his mother independent, allow her a comfortable income, and settle her in a house within three or four miles of his own.

"It was absurd in me," said he aloud, "to hesitate a moment, or make myself uneasy;—my mother cannot, ought not to expect any more from me;—all other virtues are not to be lost in that of filial duty!"

But then again he recollected that the filial duty which he had to perform was of a peculiar nature:—it was not only a mother whom he had to support, but a frail being whom he had to keep in the newly-recovered path of virtue, and a penitent whom he had to console by unremitting and pious attentions for the remorse with which she was tormented:—one, too, whom he had promised never to forsake, but to let be the first object of his tender care! And how was the proper fulfilment of these obligations

consistent with his forming the new and tender ties of a husband and a father? How was it consistent with his entering into an engagement, one of the first conditions of which must be, that he should send his mother from his house; far from that anxious and watchful eye which was to preserve her from any new temptation to vice?—for he knew that no woman could, no woman ought to sacrifice propriety to love, so far as to consent to marry him with the prospect of having his mother for her companion.

Alas! he soon found that there can be no compromise with duty;—that, if he wished to perform his duties correctly as a son, he must surrender his own gratification to effect this virtuous exertion: and, after earnestly wishing that his friend Evelyn was alive to keep up his fainting courage by his advice and approbation, he laid himself down to rest, resolved to prove himself an exemplary child, even

to the sacrifice of all his fond hopes of being blest as a husband.

The next morning he conducted his mother to his country-seat; and it is no wonder, now I have detailed these circumstances in his life, that Melbourne's countenance and manner, when there, should prove to Mrs. Villars that her son was far from happy. Indeed he had received a letter since his arrival in the country from Mr. Ellesmere, which was alone sufficient to call forth all the keen sensibilities of his nature.

Neither Ellesmere nor Clara was satisfied with the hasty letter which Melbourne had sent them. Clara, knowing that her father had rashly revealed to Melbourne what he very justly supposed to be the state of her heart, thought that delicacy, and the respect due to her feelings, ought to have suggested to Melbourne the propriety of not suffering her to remain an hour

longer unpossessed of certain proofs that her passion was returned; and therefore the letter of apology ought to have been accompanied by one to her, containing an explicit declaration of love; and Mr. Ellesmere was of the same opinion: consequently they were neither of them in a favourable disposition of mind towards Melbourne, when they heard that he was returned home, and had brought with him his mother as the future mistress of his house.

Clara heard the news with silent consternation, and her father with violent resentment. Clara endeavoured to appease him by saying that their information might not be *correct*; that Mrs. Villars might be come merely as a visitor; and she had no doubt that Melbourne would explain every thing to their satisfaction. But she could persuade him to delay writing to Melbourne only till the next day; and it was as follows:—

engagement which he had as it were forced him to make with his daughter; and bitterly repenting the declaration which he had made to Melbourne, and his own and his parental pride being severely wounded, he wrote the following answer:—

"SIR,

"I had just refused a most excellent match for my daughter only the day before you paid us your last visit; and this I did from an idea that Clara preferred you, and that you intended to pay your addresses to her. But your conduct sufficiently proves that I did not *know* you, and that my confidence in you has been ill-placed: I have therefore written to the gentleman whose addresses I refused, *retracting* my refusal; and miss Ellesmere, urged by my entreaties and by the suggestions of wounded pride and sensibility, has consented to receive his visits, and will look on him as her future husband.

"Wishing you all possible happiness with the *virtuous companion* whom you have chosen,

"I have the honour to be

Your obedient humble servant,

"R. ELLESMERE."

Some weeks had elapsed since Melbourne had received this cruel letter; and Mrs. Villars had vainly endeavoured to find out the cause of his sadness and increased indisposition, when one of the maid servants came in after dinner on some errand to Mrs. Villars, and asked her whether she had seen the fine carriages go by.

"No:—what fine carriages?"

"Oh, ma'am, such a sight of them! They are the relations of the gentleman who is to marry miss Ellesmere; and they are all come to his house, and the wedding is to take place in a fortnight; and there are to be such grand doings! we shall see the fire-works from our windows!"

Aubrey Melbourne, who was reading at the window, suddenly dropped his book and staggered out of the room; while Mrs. Villars, terrified and surprised, followed, and found him fallen down in a fit in his own dressing-room. When he recovered he assured his mother he was often seized in that manner, and begged to be left alone.

But Mrs. Villars could not help suspecting that his illness had some relation with what the servant had said, and she immediately endeavoured to find out from the servants whether their young master had ever been talked of for miss Ellesmere; but they had never heard such a thing surmised:—still she could not give up the idea; and seeing on her son's countenance, when they met in the evening, strong marks of sadness, she was sure that he concealed from her some secret fatal to his peace. The only person in the house likely to be at all in Mel-

bourne's confidence was the old butler, who had lived in the family many years, and was the only servant known to her whom Melbourne, from motives of delicacy, had not parted with on her entering his house: but old Arthur he could not prevail on himself to part with: he therefore contented himself with recommending to him to behave to his mother, for *his* sake if not for *hers*, with every possible respect. Still, the old man's feelings of virtuous indignation burst forth when he saw Mrs. Villars, leaning on her son's arm, get out of the carriage; and exclaiming—"A vile hussey! I can't bear to look at her!" he ran and shut himself up in his pantry as she passed, resolving to feign illness to escape waiting at table that day. But so many days passed before Mrs. Villars was well and composed enough to come down stairs, that old Arthur had sufficient time to conquer his angry feelings before he saw Mrs.

Villars, whom Melbourne took care he should see first *alone*, lest the sight of him should affect his mother very powerfully, and make the presence of the other servants at that moment improper.

It was well that he had taken this precaution; for as soon as Mrs. Villars saw the venerable old man enter the room she forgot all her self-command; and when she saw him turn away and wipe a tear from his eye, as the recollection no doubt of his lost master and past scenes recurred to his mind, she rushed towards him with clasped hands, and conjured him to forget and forgive her past offences.

"I—I hope," replied Arthur in a hoarse tone of voice, "that God and my poor master forgave you, and I will try to do the same as fast as I can." So saying, he hastily left the room, leaving on Mrs. Villars's mind a feeling of fear towards him, which made it no easy task for her to address him confidentially. But she felt

that the effort ought to be made,—that she ought to try to find out her son's secret,—and that Arthur probably knew it: she therefore, though unwillingly, resolved to apply to him, and her task was soon rendered easy.

The morning after that on which the company to Mr. Laurie's had arrived, two or three smart carriages passed the window as Melbourne was at the window and Arthur was busy at the side-board. On seeing them, and particularly as an open carriage passed in which sat a beautiful girl whose head seemed sedulously averted, Mrs. Villars observed that Melbourne turned very pale, and, sighing deeply, left the room; while Arthur muttered—"Parading fools! why need they always contrive to pass our house?"

"Why should they *not* pass it, my good Arthur?" said Mrs. Villars.

"O, I know why well enough."

"Do you? Then I wish you would tell me."

"With *my* good will you should have known why long ago; but now I fear it is too late."

"Too late! what is too late?"

"It is too late to prevent miss Ellesmere's marrying another man; and there is my poor master dying for her, and she belike for him—for they say that she is main sorry to marry that jinginbob fellow."

"But why did she not marry my son?"

"O, that I must not tell you!"

"No!—Am I, Arthur, am *I* the cause?"

"Belike you may," answered the blunt old man.

"And my son concealed this from me! What! I suppose his taking me into the house broke off the marriage?"

"Belike it did,—and the more's the pity, I say."

"And my generous son gave up his happiness for my sake! Oh, Aubrey, how little did I deserve such conduct from you!" Here she gave way to so violent a burst of anguish that even Arthur pitied her, and pouring out a glass of wine insisted that she should drink it, and not take on so dismally; and when she was recovered, at her very urgent request he told her all he knew respecting his young master and miss Ellesmere. Indeed he knew every thing that had passed; for, having been with Melbourne when he received Mr. Ellesmere's first letter, he had, during the violent paroxysm of feeling which it had thrown him into, ventured to read it himself; and in consequence of having done so he had earnestly conjured his master to part with his mother rather than not marry miss Ellesmere; and Melbourne, though angry at the old man's disrespect towards Mrs. Villars, was so affected by his violent

expressions of attachment towards himself, and zeal for his happiness, that he confided to him the whole state of the case, on condition that he kept the affair a secret from his mother.

"But, Arthur, do you think it is *indeed* too late," said Mrs. Villars, "to prevent this marriage,—as miss Ellesmere is, you say, attached to Aubrey?"

"Well, but suppose it is not too late—what can you do?"

"What!—You shall see, Arthur, what a mother can do to show her gratitude to the best of children!"

On hearing this, Arthur, for the first time since her entrance into the house, condescended to look at her.

"Why, *what* will you do?" said he, almost smiling on her as he spoke.

"Go to Mr. Ellesmere."

"And what will you say to him?"

"All my heart dictates."

The old man stood silent for a mo-

ment, stroking his gray head, while with the back of his hand he dashed away a tear, and then said, with a sort of a bow, "Shall I go with you, ma'am? I can't think of your going alone; I will just make myself tidy and walk behind you."

"I never thought that I should ever walk behind *her* again," said the old man to himself, "but I believe she is a true penitent." In five minutes more, Arthur being sure that he had seen Mr. Ellesmere ride towards home on horseback, Mrs. Villars stole out unperceived by her son, having positively refused Arthur's attendance—a refusal which mortified him exceedingly—but he opened the door for her; and, as he used to do in former times, he held the door open till she was out of sight.

Mrs. Villars found Mr. Ellesmere at home; and, having desired the servant to say a lady wished to see Mr. Ellesmere

alone, she was soon admitted into his study. When there, she replied to his very respectful address by throwing up her veil, and Mr. Ellesmere started on beholding Mrs. Villars. But such is female influence, and such the power of beauty (for Mrs. Villars was still beautiful), that though before he saw her Mr. Ellesmere bestowed on her every degrading epithet possible, and was convinced that he should not scruple to say *to* her all that he said *of* her—at the moment he beheld her his boasted courage failed him, and with awkward complaisance he desired her to be seated.

"Mr. Ellesmere," cried she, "you see in me a wretched, penitent, and humbled woman."

"I am glad to hear it, madam," said he, scarcely knowing what he said.

"And my son—my poor son!"

"What of Mr. Melbourne, madam?"

"I have just discovered that he is

pining away his life in a hopeless attachment to your daughter, and that I am the obstacle to his happiness."

"Really, madam!" replied Mr. Ellesmere: "Certainly—yes—there was something going forward;—but—"

"Yes, sir, though my son's filial piety led him to conceal the circumstance from me, and he knows nothing of this visit to you, I find that had he not received his guilty mother into his house, it would at this moment have contained a young and virtuous bride!—Is this not so, sir?"

"Why, madam, I can't say but that the extraordinary step which Mr. Melbourne took, at the very moment when I expected him to be the avowed and accepted lover of my daughter, was very unexpected and unwelcome to us both: but as matters were, you must feel that miss Ellesmere was forced to give up all thoughts of being Mrs. Melbourne."

"I understand you, sir:—Mr. Melbourne's mother is unworthy to associate with his wife—and no one feels this truth more deeply than I do: but, sir, is such a son as mine to be sacrificed to such a parent as I am? I am told that miss Ellesmere prefers my son to the gentleman she is about to marry."

"It is only too true, madam."

"Oh! then, sir, for mercy and for justice sake, do not conclude the marriage in question. Of the strength of Aubrey's attachment to your daughter I have convincing proofs; and if I am the only obstacle to his success, look on me, sir, as a being who exists not: I am willing to relinquish my son's society for ever;—banish me whithersoever you please;—exact an oath from me, Never, except when I am on my death-bed, or he on his, to see my son again;—nay, command me to live where he shall never be able to find me.—I care not what I

promise, and to what hardships I expose myself, so that I can prevail on you to receive him as your son-in-law, and give the mansion of his ancestors a mistress more worthy to preside in it than I am: I can only say, make your own conditions, and whatever they are I will consent to them."

"Mrs. Villars, madam, really I—— upon my soul, your offer is a very generous one, and—— but you say Mr. Melbourne knows nothing of this visit."

"No, sir, nor is he yet aware that I am acquainted with the secret of his heart; but ever since he heard that miss Ellesmere's marriage is to take place in a few days, he has not spoken without great effort, nor has he slept or eaten since. In short, I see that his life will fall a victim to his mistaken sense of duty; for surely, sir, *I* have not *deserved* such an instance of duty from him!"

"Why, really, madam, I must say, to

be honest, that Mr. Melbourne's conduct appeared to me such a work of supererogation that I believed he had no great attachment to my daughter, and brought you home to get rid of the business; but it seems I was mistaken, and——"

"And you will take pity on him, sir?"

"Why, I am much disposed to do it; and as to the reported marriage, that is entirely a mistake: the sister of Mr. Laurie, my daughter's lover, is going to be married, and it is on that account that these grand preparations have taken place; but I have not yet been able to prevail on Clara to fix any time for her marriage, and indeed Mr. Laurie has very little hope of success."

"O, sir," cried Mrs. Villars, "you have spoken such comfort to me!"

"But let us consult my daughter, she is only in the next room." So saying, he opened the door, and called his daughter. Mrs. Villars involuntarily drew back, and

would have retired. It was long since she had been admitted into the presence of a woman of unblemished virtue; and overcome with the consciousness of her guilt, she stood abashed in the presence of her who she hoped would be the wife of her son.

"My dear," said Mr. Ellesmere, "you see Mr Melbourne's mother, who comes on business of——" He said no more; for Clara, overwhelmed with a variety of emotions, sunk back in a chair, and burst into tears.

"Miss Ellesmere," said Mrs. Villars mournfully, "no motive less powerful than fear for the life of my son, and care of his happiness, could have urged me, disgraced and wretched as I am, to obtrude myself into your presence. But I come to ask my son's life from you! Listen to me, I conjure you! See," she continued, dropping on her knees, "see a mother at your feet, imploring you to restore her

only child to health and happiness! O, if there must be a victim, I will be that victim! No matter what becomes of me—I feel I am unworthy of such happiness as the enjoyment of Aubrey's constant society would give me." Here she paused, overcome by the violence of her emotions; and Clara, greatly moved, had not power to interrupt her.

"You must know, Clara," said Mr. Ellesmere, "that Mrs. Villars, unknown to her son, has come hither very generously to propose to leave his house for ever, and retire to some place at a distance from him and you, if you will but consent to marry him; as she has discovered that his attachment to you (though for her sake, and that he might do his duty by her, he wished to conquer it,) is as strong as ever, and is destroying his health: Now what say you, my dear? On the conditions which Mrs. Villars mentions, I am very willing that you should marry Mr.

Melbourne, and I am sure he has an advocate in your heart."

"He has indeed, sir," replied Clara: "but do you and Mrs. Villars imagine I am so little able to appreciate Mr. Melbourne's worth, as to be incapable of imitating his virtue and her generosity? What, sir! shall I insult Mr. Melbourne so far as to make it the condition of our marriage, that he shall turn his mother out of doors? No—from the bottom of my soul I love and venerate his filial piety; and so dearly do I esteem him, that I promise never to be another's; but on such conditions, never, never will I be his: nay, I should despise him if he wished me to accede to them!"

"Miss Ellesmere," cried Mrs. Villars eagerly, "I love, I adore you for your scruples, but beware how you drive me to desperation: remember, that I know myself, undeserving as I am, to be the only

obstacle to my son's happiness—and such a son——!"

Clara shuddered and turned pale at the horrible insinuation contained in these words: but before she could reply to them Aubrey Melbourne himself rushed into the room; and expecting to see no one but Mr. Ellesmere with his mother, he staggered and changed colour on beholding Clara.

"Oh, my mother!" cried he, "I know what brought you hither, and I come to declare——"

"Make no rash resolutions, Aubrey, on this subject, lest I force you to repent them!" replied Mrs. Villars, with desperation in her voice and manner. "On condition that I shall live apart from you, Mr. Ellesmere consents to give you his daughter."

"And what says miss Ellesmere?" said Melbourne, eagerly and angrily.

"That, on such conditions, tenderly as she esteems you," answered Clara, "she will never be yours. Mrs. Villars has just proved most nobly, that she has the heart of a mother, and never will I rob her of the benefit and consolation which she has a right to derive from the society of her son."

Melbourne, as she said this, snatched her hand to his lips, and burst into tears; and Mrs. Villars, clasping her hands together, rushed out of the room: Melbourne followed and brought her back.

"Whither were you going?" said he.

"I know not," she replied in a hurried manner, "and no matter where: no matter what becomes of a wretch like me, a mother who has been the means of murdering her own son! a son so kind, so good——"

"Mother, dearest mother, recollect yourself," cried Melbourne, clasping his

arms round her, while Clara pressed her hand tenderly in hers.

"Upon my soul I can't bear this," cried Mr. Ellesmere with an audible sob. "Melbourne, I scorn to be outdone in generosity: if Clara wishes it, she shall be yours without any conditions whatever; for though to be sure Mrs. Villars has been very culpable, she is your mother you know,—and I, why I am a father, and I can feel for——" Here he turned away, while Melbourne, unable to speak, grasped his hand convulsively, and his daughter following him sobbed out her thanks on his shoulder.

But it was some time before Mrs. Villars recovered her senses sufficiently to understand what Mr. Ellesmere had said. When she was composed enough to think and speak, she insisted on a compromise taking place, instead of the conditions; and this Mr. Ellesmere himself warmly

urged; nor were Clara and Melbourne at all averse to agree to it. Her plan was, that Mrs. Villars, though she resided in her son's house, should have her own separate suite of apartments, that she might not interfere with the company who should visit them, and be the means of keeping from their table such guests amongst her own sex as Clara ought to be ambitious of receiving: nor was it to be known, except amongst their very intimate friends, that the mother of Melbourne and Clara had any intercourse together; as Mrs. Villars strongly insisted on the propriety of her doing homage to virtue by separating herself in appearance from the society of the virtuous.

"Mrs. Villars," cried Ellesmere, "give me your hand; you are a young woman still, and have a long life before you; and I foresee, that if it be ever allowed possi-

ble for a woman to atone for the vices of her youth, you will be that woman!"

How Melbourne loved him for this compliment to his mother! and he was about to express his feelings, when Arthur, who was glad of an excuse to come to Mr. Ellesmere's, knowing that his master was gone thither in pursuit of his mother, as soon as he had by threats and entreaties found out why she was gone thither, desired to be admitted, as he had a letter to deliver to Mrs. Villars.

The letter was from general Dorville, who, feeling himself declining, was desirous at last of offering Mrs. Villars all the reparation in his power by proposing to make her his wife; especially as he would, if she accepted his offer, receive from her those soothing attentions, in the season of illness, which are never so well administered as by the hand of duty and the watchful tenderness of woman.

"I now *feel* most bitterly," said he in his letter, "that I ought not to have burned with implacable resentment towards you because you put in practice against me those lessons of vice which I was the first to teach you; and from my soul I forgive your fault, as I hope mine to be forgiven.

"But, alas! though I love you still, I fear that I am the object of your just aversion, and that you will not be willing to leave such a son as yours is (noble-minded boy, would he were mine!) for such a husband as I am——"

"No—it is a painful trial indeed," said Mrs. Villars: "but I ought to court trials; and I will set off for London, attend him to the altar, and undertake my mournful task directly;" nor, on such an occasion, could Melbourne object to her immediate departure.

But before she went, every thing was arranged in order that her son's marriage might take place as soon as possible.

"And now, my dear father," said Clara, when Mrs. Villars was gone, and she found herself alone with him, "let me own to you that I feel a weight removed from my mind by the marriage and absence of Mrs. Villars, and the prospect which they hold out of our not being likely to live in the same house. For I think there is nothing more dangerous to the virtuous and to the interests of virtue, than association with the guilty who possess amiable and attractive qualities; for that salutary hatred which we feel towards vice must necessarily be destroyed by it. I believe that our detestation of vice can be properly maintained only by keeping ourselves at least at a degree of distance from the vicious. I have been educated in an abhorrence of adultery; yet surely this salutary abhorrence would have been considerably lessened had I associated daily with an adulteress, and one who by so many virtues and talents throws a sort of charm even over

her frailties! No, my dear father, it is well for me, well for the children whom I may perhaps have to educate, that Mrs. Villars, instead of being my companion, is called away to atone, by a life of painful duty, for those crimes against society which render her unfit in the opinion of judgment and experience to be the constant associate of a young and innocent woman."

To the justice of these reflections Mr. Ellesmere immediately assented: he joined with Clara in rejoicing that she was not obliged to disregard the suggestions of prudence and delicacy, and attend to those of love, gratitude, and compassion, for Mrs. Villars.

Mrs. Villars *knew* that a task awaited her, but not *how* painful a task it was likely to be.—She had to behold the once gay, handsome, graceful, captivating Dorville, the man who had charmed and corrupted her heart, and for whom she had sacrificed her husband, her child, her

character, and her honour, changed into a mass of disease, shuddering at the past, agonized by the present, and terrified at the future! And this man, whom she had once loved, but now loved no longer, it was her duty to marry, and to attend through all the painful changes of his illness.

Nor was there any probability that her trial would soon be over. But she did not suffer herself to repine at the days of painful duty and nights of sleepless anxiety which were now her lot: she felt she had deserved them all; and that to pass from a life of vice, as hers had been, into the immediate enjoyment of the society of her son and his innocent and accomplished bride, would have been a blessing too great for her to receive; and after she had been more than a twelvemonth with her husband, she wrote the following letter to Melbourne:—

"I have just had a visit from Mr. Ellesmere, and with tears in his eyes he

talked to me of your happiness, and of the general love and admiration which attend you and his daughter wherever you are seen and known! Happy Mr. Ellesmere! he can witness your felicity! I know that it exists, and even that is more satisfaction than I deserve. He tells me too that your little boy grows daily, and that there never was so fine a child seen. May he live to bless you! Exemplary parents as you will be, you will never know the pang of feeling that you have not merited your child's filial attentions.

"Oh, my son! if I dared to hope that any sufferings could at all atone for and expiate offences great as mine, what I am now undergoing might make my peace with the great Being whom I have offended.

"My husband is never easy but when I am with him. He takes nothing but from my hand, nor is there any office,

however distressing, that he will excuse me from performing. But this were a slight affliction to me:—the dreadful part of my task is, being forced to behold the wretchedness of his mind, to listen to his horrible expressions of the fear of death, and the long catalogue of crimes which his tortured conscience is continually presenting to his remembrance! Sometimes he implores my pardon with phrensied eagerness, for having lured me to misery and dishonour; at another time he reproaches me for having been his seducer; and then he imprecates curses on my head for having left him for another, while he still loved me with unabated affection! Then he repeats your cutting reproach to him on the memorable evening when we met at the theatre, and vows that were he well again, you should die by no other hand than his; but the next moment he melts into tears, calls you the noblest of human beings, and conjures me to obtain your

forgiveness for him, without which he declares that he shall not die in peace!

"The sight of his altered person drives him into a temporary madness; yet every day he insists on looking at himself, and then he sheds tears of anguish at the idea of the disgust and hatred which he must excite in me. Such are the agonies which I every day witness; such is the life which I am doomed to lead, perhaps for years: but believe me, my dear child, that I bless the hand which thus chastises me.

"I know that you are happy as your virtues deserve; and knowing that, I submit to the dispensations of Providence towards myself, with the contrition of a penitent sinner, and the trembling but certain hope of a confiding christian."

LOVE AND DUTY.

THE following tale is founded on a trial, given at length in the collection of French trials, called *Causes Célèbres*:—a trial which appeared to me so full of interest, and so replete with moral instruction, that I was desirous of making it generally known. Therefore, as trials are interesting to few only, but tales to many, I have ventured to call in the aid of fiction to assist the progress of salutary truth; and I hope, by adding the *vraisemblable* to the *vrai*, I shall not have weakened the general effect of the narrative.

All the persons in the story, with the exception of three or four, are real persons, were actors in the scenes which I have related, and bore the names by which I have called them: and in that part of the story which I have translated from authentic documents, two or three facts only are all that I have ventured to alter.

The count and countess de Montgommery occupied the ground floor and the first floor of a house at Paris, in the Rue Royale. This ground floor consisted of three apartments, each of which opened into an alley, which led from the *porte cochère*, or great gates, into the court. Gagnard, the count's chaplain, the page, and the valet de chambre, lodged in one of these apartments; the two others served for different uses. On the left of the alley, and opposite these three doors, was

the staircase which led to the apartments of the count and countess. These apartments consisted chiefly of an anti-room and of a bed-room, and from the bed-room they used to pass into a closet, or small apartment, where they kept their money and their jewels.

The apartments of monsieur and madame d'Anglade were immediately above those of the count and countess, and they had also the use of the second, the third, and the fourth stories. On the other side of the court was another range of building, composed of some rooms which were tenanted by the sister of monsieur de Seligny, the sister-in-law of the count, the waiting-maid of the countess, and some workwomen who were embroidering some furniture for monsieur de Montgommery.

I shall not expatiate on the birth and

consequence of the count de Montgommery; his family is already sufficiently known as antient and honourable, and a detail of this kind would be but little to the purpose; but it is absolutely necessary that I should make known the situation and pretensions of his fellow-lodger, the marquis d'Anglade.

Laurent Guillemot d'Anglade, born of honest but humble parents, lived in the style of a man who was enabled by opulence to support the splendour of his birth: for such was his pride, so eager was he to pass for a man of noble extraction, and to conceal his real origin, that he assumed all the airs of consequence which he observed in the nobles with whom he associated, and spared no expense to enable him to vie with them in dress and in luxuries. All his fortune, notwithstanding, consisted of 1650 livres per annum, and

of the interest paid him by the duke de Grammont for the loan of 6000 livres. And with this slender income he assumed the rank of nobleman: he talked incessantly of his chateau d'Anglade, which was in reality little better than a cottage nearly in ruins. On this slender income he also occupied a considerable range of apartments, kept a carriage and several servants, associated with men of the first rank, played high, and lent out money on interest.

In every respect, except in the indulgence of this mean and despicable pride, founded on folly and supported by falsehood, monsieur d'Anglade was virtuous, and even estimable. He was a fond husband and an affectionate father; and had he not had the meanness to assume nobility of birth, he would have possessed the more real nobility of the mind.

Madame d'Anglade was distinguished by nothing but her retiring domestic virtues; by her attachment to her husband and her daughter, a girl at this time only fourteen years old; and for her exemplary attention to all her family duties.

The count and countess, and the d'Anglades, lived together on friendly terms, but without perhaps feeling towards each other any real attachment. On the contrary, it is most likely that under seeming civility lurked real dislike, and that the count looked on d'Anglade with no favourable eyes: for, if it be true that the proud and the ambitious view with eyes of envy and aversion those who are higher in rank, and possessed of greater affluence than themselves, it is as true that the man of wealth and rank views with hatred and indignation those who presume to approach him in splendour and magnificence of living;

and that he would gladly seize the first opportunity of mortifying the *parvenu* who attempts to live on an equality with him, and of degrading him to his original nothingness.

The count had an estate at Ville-boisin, and one day he invited the marquis and madame d'Anglade to go and spend some time there with him and the countess. At first they accepted this invitation; but afterwards they excused themselves from accompanying their noble friends, on, as they thought, a very weak and frivolous excuse.

And such, no doubt, it was likely to appear; for they could not give the true reasons for declining the visit to Ville-boisin; one of which was, that d'Anglade, faithful to his resolution never to receive a favour which it was not in his power to repay, resolved to decline partaking of the count's hospitality at his

castle, because he could not in return invite him to a castle of his own. If he dined with the count, he could invite him to dine with him; but he had no means of receiving him and his lady during several days, as his guests: therefore, with the entire approbation of madame d'Anglade, he excused himself from keeping his engagement.

The other reason was, that d'Anglade had received from the count and countess what appeared to him a personal slight. Perhaps, like many other persons who occasionally associate with their superiors, there were times when he saw himself reminded of his inferiority, and the smile of affability suddenly exchanged for the frown of supercilious coldness. D'Anglade had perhaps sometimes felt in the circles of the great as one does in a menagerie of wild beasts, which look so quiet and so good-humoured at times in their cages, that we are tempted to approach the

gratings and endeavour to be familiar with them, when a sudden *coup de patte* forces us to resume our distance, and reminds us smartly enough of the dangers of presumption. A *coup de patte* like this it is very certain that d'Anglade had received; and while still smarting under it, it was very natural that he should wish not to expose himself during several days to a repetition of so painful an admonisher: therefore the count and countess were forced to leave Paris without them.

They set off on the Monday evening for their country-seat, and gave out that they should not return till the following Thursday at night. They carried with them François Gagnard, their chaplain, and all their domestics, except a waiting-maid named Formènie, a servant boy, and the four girls who were working embroidery.

The key of the first door of the apartments was intrusted to the waiting-maid;

but the chaplain double-locked the door of the room in which he slept, and carried the key away with him. It seems that there was no porter to the house, and that the count's servants performed the office of one.

The count and countess returned a day sooner than they were expected; brought back, it appears, by superstitious terror. Monsieur de Montgommery had found blood on a table-cloth and napkin; and having looked on this circumstance as a bad omen, he resolved, from a foreboding of misfortune, to set off for Paris immediately.

The chaplain, the page, and the valet de chambre, who came on horseback, arrived after their master. The chaplain found that the door of their common apartment was only pulled-to, and not shut, though it had always appeared to be so, during the absence of the count and countess, and though he knew that he

had double-locked it when he went away, and had carried the key with him. This circumstance, though it was remarked by all the servants, by those who had staid at Paris, and those who had been to Ville-boisin, was not at the moment taken much notice of; and the count and countess sat down to supper in one of the low apartments, where they were in the habit of supping.

They were still at table, when the sieur d'Anglade returned home at eleven o'clock at night accompanied by the abbé de Villars and the abbé de Fleury, with whom he had supped at the house of the president Robèrt. He staid below to converse with the count and countess; and some time after, madame d'Anglade came and took part in their conversation; and every one parted for the night, without mention having been made that any unusual incident had happened.

The next evening the count lodged a

complaint or information with the sieur Deffeta, the lieutenant of police, at the Chatelet. He declared that during his absence, an absence only of three days, the lock of his strong box had been forced, and that he had been robbed of thirteen bags, each containing a thousand livres in silver money, 11,500 livres in gold in two pistole pieces, a hundred louis d'ors, new and *au cordon* (a peculiar kind of coinage), and a necklace of pearls worth 4000 livres.

The lieutenant of police, the king's *procureur*, and a commissary, immediately came on the premises. These three officers, having found no fracture in the doors or locks of the apartment, were immediately persuaded that the robbery must have been committed by the assistance of false keys, and by persons residing in the house; consequently they concluded that they ought immediately to search all the apartments. The sieur d'Anglade and

his wife immediately desired that the search might begin in their rooms, and monsieur d'Anglade conducted the officers himself into all the places occupied by him and his family. They opened the closets, the coffers, the drawers; they searched in the beds, in the mattresses,—but they found nothing. They next entered the garret; but madame d'Anglade excused herself from accompanying them thither, on pretence of being suddenly seized with a sort of vertigo and faintness. In the garret they found an old chest, and in this chest, which was full of clothes and linen, they discovered a rouleau of 70 louis, *au cordon*, wrapt up in a printed paper containing the remains of a genealogical table, which the count declared to be his own. He added that these louis must be part of those which had been stolen from him; because his and these were coined in the same year,—a circumstance which he had forgotten to

mention in his complaint. D'Anglade was therefore asked where those louis d'ors came from; and he could only answer that he could not tell, but that he could give a good account of them.

The lieutenant of police seized these louis, in order that they might be carefully put in deposit, as proofs leading to conviction of the real culprit; and d'Anglade counted them himself before the judge took possession of them. As he counted them he felt his hand shake, and he exclaimed, "I tremble!" Some of the domestics who were present declared then, and repeated afterwards in the information, that d'Anglade had appeared surprised at the arrival of the count, and that his wife seemed confounded when she was first informed of it.

When the whole party had left the garret, madame d'Anglade desired the lieutenant of police to observe that the door of the apartment in which the chaplain, the page, and the valet de chambre slept,

had been only pulled-to, and not shut, for which odd circumstance there were doubtless sufficient reasons to be given; and she added that the valet de chambre ought to be examined, as that might lead to a discovery, and he very possibly might have been guilty of the robbery. The precipitation with which madame d'Anglade thus endeavoured to fix the crime on one particular individual, when the count himself had not yet dared to suspect any one, caused not only surprise but suspicion in the mind of the judge; and with a sort of retributive justice, this eagerness to accuse fatally recoiled on the accuser. But this surprise and these suspicions increased, and spread from one person to the other; when the count declared solemnly that his valet had followed him into the country, and did not arrive in Paris again till after him. Madame d'Anglade, however, still persisted in suspecting this servant, and replied, that he had in all probability concealed some one in his chamber in

order that the robbery might be committed. But how could this robber, if so concealed, have been able to carry away the stolen goods, when the key of the street-door was actually all the time in the possession of monsieur and madame d'Anglade? The same observation served to justify Formênie the waiting-maid of the countess; who, as was before observed, remained in the house during the absence of her master, and had been intrusted with the key of the first door of the apartment.

After this conversation they searched the room which madame d'Anglade was so eager to have examined; and they actually found in a corner of it five bags containing a thousand livres each, and a sixth bag containing a thousand livres, excepting the sum of two hundred and nineteen livres and nineteen sols.

This discovery, instead of averting suspicion from the d'Anglades, fixed it on them still more strongly: for, as they had

once been the principal occupiers of the house, it was very possible that they had master-keys to all the apartments; and it was immediately recollected that when the marquis d'Anglade had lived in the apartments then occupied by the count, and à monsieur Grimaudet had lived in the apartment immediately above him, Grimaudet had been robbed of a considerable quantity of plate; nor was it doubted but that more would have been stolen, had it not been perceived that the key of the first chamber had been taken away.

The criminal had never been discovered, but it was very evident that the robbery had been committed by means of the stolen key. By means of a false or master-key the robbery on the count also must have been committed; and while these recollections and these ideas occurred to the lieutenant of police, and to the other persons present, they could not help remembering that the d'Anglades were oc-

cupants of the house during both the robberies.

The only lock which had been forced was that of the strong box, and it was undoubtedly impossible that the thief should have procured himself the key of a coffer which had never been at his disposal. It was a fact too, that the d'Anglades knew that the count had by him a considerable sum in money; and they also knew the exact amount of it, as they had offered to procure him the means of employing it to advantage: besides, though they had accepted the invitation to Villeboisin, they excused themselves from going thither, on a frivolous pretext, and by not going they remained sole masters of the house; they had likewise required to have the key of the street-door in their custody, though it was usually left in the care of the count's servants.

Amongst the louis d'ors, too, were several of a rare and high-prized quality.

Such louis d'ors had been stolen from the count, and d'Anglade could not say where he obtained his!—and where are they hidden?—in a garret, and in a chest designed to contain old clothes and old linen; in short, in a place where no one would think of looking for a valuable deposit. This consideration, joined to the excuse of indisposition made by madame d'Anglade, in order to avoid being present while her garret was searched, seemed to prove that she feared the discovery of the stolen goods.

At least thus reasoned, and thus felt, thus suspected the lieutenant of police; and this mass of presumptive evidence was increased by the appearance of uneasiness and terror which was *said* to be exhibited by the husband and wife on learning the unexpected return of the count and countess; for as yet they had not had time to remove all the stolen effects! However, madame d'Anglade

sought to avert all suspicion of her own guilt, by endeavouring to fix it on another. But she did so in vain; for the three servants whom she wished to criminate had been under their master's eye during the whole term of his absence. It was therefore impossible that they should have opened the door of their chamber; and yet, though one of them had double-locked it, and carried the key away with him, the door was found open when they returned! Consequently it must have been opened by a false key; and who but the d'Anglades could possibly be in possession of one? Therefore the money found there, instead of being evidence against the persons who lodged in that apartment, appeared evidence against the d'Anglades; and the earnestness with which madame d'Anglade urged them to search that room seemed only to prove that, as it was an apartment not belonging to her, the stolen

effects being found there would prevent, she thought, suspicion from lighting on her and her husband, and fix it entirely on the innocent servants.

All these ideas combined, formed in the opinion of the lieutenant of police a body of evidence so strong, that he could not help saying to d'Anglade, "Either you or I committed this robbery." Let me observe here, with the honest pride of an Englishwoman, that no judge in my country could have uttered so wicked a prejudgment without being infamous for life, and that no one could have listened to it without immediately reproving him in the language of virtuous indignation and of outraged humanity.

But this judge of the unhappy d'Anglades, mistaking the agitation of anguish for that of conscious guilt, and being more eager to draw conclusions from slight premises than to wait for the exhibition of strong ones, allowed his suspicions to

be so riveted on d'Anglade and his wife, that he thought it superfluous to search the other apartments, especially when the count proudly assured him that he would answer for the honesty of his domestics.

Immediately then the lieutenant of police, on the requisition of the count, ordered the commitment of the d'Anglades. But before they were conducted to prison they were searched, and in d'Anglade's purse were found seventeen louis d'ors, and a double Spanish pistole; a circumstance which added to the suspicious circumstances preceding this; for a considerable portion of the effects stolen from the count consisted of pistoles. The husband was then conducted to the Chatelet, and the wife to the fort L'Evêque, where they were immediately confined in separate dungeons, and the jailors forbidden under a severe penalty to let them speak to any human being.

The prosecution now commenced; and

the lieutenant of police, that man whose mind was crowded with prejudices against the unfortunate d'Anglades, that very man was to preside at the tribunal as their judge. D'Anglade indeed appealed against his jurisdiction, as persons about to be tried in our courts sometimes challenge such jurymen as are, they know, likely to be adverse to them; but he appealed in vain, and his appeal only served to add personal animosity to the prejudice which Deffeta had already conceived against him. Witnesses were examined indeed with seeming impartiality, but their evidence was in reality twisted to the purposes of those who desired to prove guilty the man whom they were determined to believe so.

Another circumstance which operated powerfully against the accused, and which holds out a warning example of the danger as well as folly and wickedness of any species of duplicity, was, the mystery in which d'Anglade, whose false pride was

not yet sufficiently subdued, still continued to envelop his real birth and fortune. For, as if he foolishly thought, that in the moral, as in the physical world, what is only dimly seen, and partially revealed, borrows thence the appearance of grandeur, and that a man's origin, like a mountain whose top is hidden by clouds, and seen in the dim shade of twilight, acquires dignity and greatness from being involved in mystery,—certain it is, that it was with the greatest difficulty the judge could follow him through all the evasions by which he replied to the simplest questions relative to his family and means of living: and as wherever there is concealment and evasion one is justified in believing that there is also guilt, it was not in the power of any judge, any witness, or any enemy, to injure d'Anglade in the minds of those present in as great a degree as he injured himself by this paltry and culpable conduct.

His family was, it was easily ascertained, by no means noble, though he really had the title of marquis; but it was not so easy to decide with certainty on the manner in which he was enabled to support a style of living so superior to his apparent revenue; and on this subject, as well as on the other, he refused to be explicit. There is, however, reason to suppose, that so far from d'Anglade's having increased his income by the unworthy means imputed to him—such as play, usury, swindling, and robbery—he employed certain hours of the morning in virtuous industry, and in employments which, however derogatory they might be deemed to the rank of gentlemen, by the noble, the idle, and the empty-minded, would have raised him high in the opinion of all those whose judgment on human conduct is enlightened, and whose approbation it is an honour to possess.

To be brief:—on no stronger grounds

than that seventy louis d'ors similar to those lost by the count de Montgommery were found hidden on the premises; that d'Anglade while he counted them showed strong emotion, and exclaimed, "I tremble;" that madame d'Anglade excused herself from accompanying them in the search in the garret, and with great eagerness endeavoured to fix suspicion on the valet de chambre,—d'Anglade and his unhappy wife had been committed to prison; and on the same weak evidence d'Anglade was judged deserving to be put to the rack, in order that a confession of his guilt might be wrung from him; and he actually underwent the *question ordinaire et extraordinaire.*

But when there he confessed nothing; for indeed he had nothing to confess. Immediately afterward by a definitive judgment he was condemned to the galleys for nine years, and his wife was banished from the jurisdiction of Paris for the same space of time, besides being condemned to such

restitutions and reparations to the count de Montgommery as completely swallowed up their already slender property.

Indeed the judges were so convinced of d'Anglade's guilt, that as the nature of the proceedings against him did not allow them to inflict the punishment of death, which they thought due to his crime, they resolved to put in force every torture which the law did not forbid them to use.

It is the usual custom to give some refreshment to the unfortunate wretches to whom torture has been applied. But d'Anglade, instead of receiving this cheering attention, was conducted from the place of torture into the darkest dungeon of the tower of Montgommery. But in his miserable dungeon, and while his body, lacerated by the rack, was bent to the earth with every possible physical pain and weakness, his mind happily shook off the trammels of false pride and worldly vanity; and as a man and as a chris-

tian he rose superior to his trials, and became a striking example of piety and patience. But at first his mind, as well as his frame, sunk beneath the suddenness as well as cruelty of the blow. The same hour saw him affluent and respected, and an accused robber and a prisoner! The same hour saw him happy in the society of a fond wife and affectionate child, and torn from their embraces, perhaps for ever, while they were dragged to the unwholesome walls of one dungeon and he to another.

Besides, the man who thus suffered, was one even weakly tenacious on the score of honour, one who loved reputation and respect more than life itself; and now, though innocent of even an intentional crime, this slave of pride and reputation saw himself for ever banished from society, by being accused and convicted of atrocious guilt, while those that he most tenderly loved were the sharers in

his ignominy and in his unmerited sufferings.

Nor was the fate of madame d'Anglade much less severe. Timid and retiring in her nature, she had always avoided notice, and thought "a woman's loveliest station was retreat." But now she was made an object of public observation and notoriety, and not by a display of heroic virtue, such as has sometimes distinguished women in all countries and in all times; not by a splendid exertion of talents, capable by the fame which waits upon it to recompense the woman who has performed it for the pain and injury which she often experiences from the envy of her own sex and the severe tenaciousness of the other; but she was called forth from her virtuous and respectable obscurity in order to be arraigned as a thief, and imprisoned as a convicted felon; and she whose modest eye had always shrunk from the gaze even of respectful

admiration, was now exposed to the agonizing stare of unfeeling curiosity and public contempt.

Poor, injured innocents! In England, where the nature and the laws of evidence have been deeply studied and are thoroughly understood, ye would not have pleaded for justice in vain, but acquittal would have instantly followed accusation.

But, as I before observed, the mind of d'Anglade, aided by religion, conquered at length the dreadful feelings of anguish, which at first were the necessary consequences of his sudden and most unmerited misfortunes. Yet, as a husband and a father, he suffered still; and at the thought of his wife and child, even the fortitude of his piety forsook him; and when he learnt from the jailor that he was forbidden all communication with them, or with any one, his agony baffled description, and what he had before suffered seemed trifling in comparison.

"But surely, surely I shall be allowed to see my child!" cried he in a transport of grief.

"Yes; in nine years' time, when you return from the galleys," replied the jailor.

"I shall never return," said d'Anglade, with the look and tone of desperation, "I shall die there;" when suddenly he reflected that there was consolation in that thought; and as he was so soon to pass from time to eternity, he felt how insignificant were all the ties and trials of this world; and lifting up his soul to his Creator, the murmurs of regret were lost in the consoling aspirations of pious patience and religious hope.

A few days after, he was taken from the tower of Montgommery, and led, bruised and lacerated as he was, to the castle of La Tournelle.

At length, overpowered by so many evils, he fell dangerously ill, and it was

judged necessary to administer the sacrament to him. While receiving it, he declared by words, and subsequently in writing, that he was entirely innocent of the crime imputed to him; but that he pardoned his enemies and persecutors; and that all the regret which he now felt was, that he was only sentenced to be tied to a chain, whereas his blessed Saviour was nailed to a cross. Unhappily, however, he got the better of his illness, and remained in this horrible abode, supported by charitable contributions, till the departure of the chain of galley-slaves to which he belonged.

It is said that the count de Montgommery solicited to have the departure of d'Anglade take place even before he was restored to health; and that he waited on the road to see him pass, in order to enjoy the horrible spectacle of his sufferings and humiliation. Such was the man whose notice was once supposed by the

deceived d'Anglade to confer honour upon him ! But when the innocent victim beheld his persecutor, and understood the dreadful motives which led him to witness his distress, he feebly exclaimed—having first raised his eyes to Heaven with an expression of meek resignation—"I would rather at this moment be the poor, suffering d'Anglade, than the count de Montgommery: for is it not nobler to suffer than to do evil?"

The rack had so much injured the limbs of d'Anglade that it was impossible for him to use them, and if he moved in the slightest degree he experienced the most insupportable agonies. He was therefore laid upon the cart by two men; and at night when they slept on the road he was taken out and laid on a little straw, in a barn or under a hedge. When he arrived at Marseilles, he was conducted to the hospital for convicts there, where he had soon the happiness

of learning from the medical attendant that his life was drawing to a close. At this moment the dear images of his wife and child recurred to him in all their power. "And I must never see them more!—and I must die without embracing them!" he cried, "nay, without sending them my parting blessing!"

Fortunately, however, the surgeon who attended him was himself a husband and a father, and could therefore feel for d'Anglade.

"Dictate to me," said he to him, "whatever you wish to say to your wife and child, and I pledge my honour that it shall be delivered to them."

D'Anglade thanked him with his tears. It was the first time, for months, that he had heard the voice of kindness, and it was welcome indeed. But there was no time to be lost; and the surgeon having procured the necessary materials, d'An-

glade, with a considerable effort, dictated as follows:—

"I am dying, best beloved of my heart, the victim of my sufferings; but I conjure you, my Sophia, to rise superior to this new trial. Live, I charge you, to see my character and your own cleared from every stain!—and something whispers me, that, sooner or later, our innocence shall be made manifest. Live, therefore—I repeat it—to hasten that moment, if it be possible, and to enjoy it for the sake of our innocent girl, now, alas! enveloped in her parents' shame. O that I could once more behold you both!—But God's will be done!—I trust that we shall meet in heaven. My Constantia! my child! accept my parting blessing, and listen to my last advice:—Think nothing dishonourable but vice—nothing valuable but virtue. Conquer poverty by industry; and blush not

for the labour that confers on you honourable independence! May you, too, live to aid the re-establishment of my fame and honour, and to enjoy the accomplishment of it! O my child! let your filial piety comfort and console your poor mother!—And is it thus we part?—But it is the will of my Creator, and I will murmur no more.

"Farewell!—farewell for ever!

"L. G. D'ANGLADE."

As soon as d'Anglade was no more, the surgeon inclosed this letter in an envelope, which contained a few lines from himself, to madame d'Anglade, announcing to her the death of her husband, after such weakness and such suffering as made him incapable of writing himself; and assuring her, at the same time, that in his death he was happy—for that he died the death of the righteous; and that he earnestly wished his own latter end might be like his.

Let us now return to madame d'Anglade and her only child, whose fate had been little less unfortunate than that of the marquis.—When dragged to prison she was on the point of becoming a mother a second time, and terror and anxiety soon had a sensible effect on her health, and a fatal one on the yet unborn infant, which lived not to see the light of day. In this terrible situation, and while liable to long and successive fainting fits, she had no assistance but from Constantia, whose own health was considerably injured by the hardships which surrounded them.

In the middle of a rigorous winter they were in a cavern where no air could enter, and where chill damps stood upon the wall; a little charcoal in an earthen pot was all the fire which was allowed them, and the smoke was so offensive and dangerous that it increased rather than diminished their sufferings; their food de-

pended on charity, and they had no relief but what their priest from time to time procured them.

At length, as a great favour, they were removed to a place less damp, to which there was a little window; but the window was closed up, and the fumes of the charcoal were as noxious here as in the cavern which they had left. Here, however, they remained four or five months; and madame d'Anglade, supported by the hope of happier days, and by the ever dear expectation of being at last restored to liberty and her husband, if not to reputation and society, still clung to existence, though held on terms wretched as these were.

But at length the surgeon's and her husband's letters reached her; and the hope which had supported her was destroyed for ever.

"Mother, dear mother!" cried Con-

stantia, a few days after they had heard the mournful tidings, "do not give way to this excessive sorrow;—remember, my father bids you live!—live to see his memory justified! and I—think how earnestly I desire you to live for my sake!"

Madame d'Anglade tried to live, and tried to console herself with the idea that her beloved husband was not only removed from his sufferings, but was in a state of happiness. But the mortal blow was sped!—the hope for which she supported life was no more!—Disgrace and imprisonment, sickness, poverty, and dependence she had endured with fortitude; for the husband of her heart yet lived, and she knew that his fortitude equalled hers. Their punishment was, she knew, but for a time; and at the end of that time they should meet, rehearse their past sufferings together, and perhaps forget

them; nay, be repaid for them by their happy re-union!—But d'Anglade was dead; and all her flattering dreams were vanished for ever.

"It is past, my child!" cried she in a faint voice, in less than a fortnight after she received the melancholy tidings: "the struggle is at length over, and, purified by suffering, I am about, I trust, to be re-united to your blessed father;—but oh! when I think of you, and your unprotected state, the thought of death distracts me, and nothing but horrors surround me!"

I will not dwell on a scene so painful to the feelings as that exhibited by an affectionate mother leaving an only daughter in so forlorn and so cruel a situation, and under such deplorable circumstances. Suffice it, that madame d'Anglade breathed her last in a few hours after the conversation related above, leaving Constantia no resources but in her

own energies: and when d'Anglade's crime, according to the many—his unjust condemnation, according to the few—was forgotten, and talked of no more, the fatal consequences of it continued to be felt by his unhappy orphan, who had ever present to her thoughts the consciousness of her parents' disgrace, and the misery which her poor mother experienced on her account, even in the last pangs of dissolution.

But to some it is given to know only the pleasures of paternity: and while the dying madame d'Anglade was agonized by the consciousness that she left the exemplary child, whose filial piety had soothed her sorrows and alleviated her sufferings by the most unwearied attention, no inheritance but disgrace, no dower but unmerited misfortune, the President DES ESSARS was as happy in the hopes, as the mother of Constantia was wretched in the fears, of a parent.

He too had an only child; a youth who was accomplished, dutiful, moral, and pious, and who was at once the pride and happiness of his life.

When the unfortunate d'Anglades had been dead rather more than three years, Eugene des Essars had reached the age of one-and-twenty; and his father was desirous of marrying him to a young and rich heiress, who had been the companion and playfellow of his childhood.

But Eugene's affections did not follow the direction of his father's wishes, and his heart was as yet untouched by any one: therefore, though he had hitherto been eager to obey the President's slightest desires, he earnestly entreated, on this occasion, that he might be allowed to please himself, as he felt an irresistible repugnance to become a husband, unless he entertained for his intended wife a decided preference and devoted attachment. The President reluctantly, but wisely,

granted his son the freedom which he asked; and the young heiress, piqued at Eugene's indifference, immediately married another man: while his father, having not yet fixed on another heiress to supply her place, as candidate for Eugene's affections, listened with complacency to his objections against marrying at all; and declared, that he should always feel it his duty to consult Eugene's feelings on a subject of more importance to him than to any one else.

Still, in spite of this obliging declaration, Eugene felt his serenity and his peace completely interrupted, by the consciousness that the President had once proposed marriage to him, and therefore might do so again—as the inhabitant of a room which has once been reported to have been visited by a ghost, never feels completely safe in it from a second visit, although the perturbed spirit is supposed to have been laid.

Eugene was completely happy in his single state, as he was uninterrupted in his studies, independent in his will; and in spite of himself he became thoughtful and disturbed from the mere apprehension of a distant evil; for an evil to him any change would have appeared. But his feelings and his pensiveness remained unquestioned and unobserved. He was so much more devoted to study than to society; so honourably ambitious to qualify himself to shine in the profession of the law, for which he was designed; so much fonder of books than of men, that no one observed his increased gravity and thoughtfulness: and his father was more willing to attribute it to abstraction and learned reveries, than to a sense of present, or the apprehension of future uneasiness. But though the eyes even of an affectionate parent may be blinded by some particular and powerful circumstances; though the friend of the day, and the companion in crowds and in dissipation

may not observe the casual variations of our looks and our countenances; the domestic who has been accustomed to look up in our face for the usual smile of goodwill, tempering the command of authority; the dependent, who owes to our attention not only daily bread, but that degree of confidence which such attention can alone impart—to these, the slightest cloud athwart one's brow is discernible; and in their faces, better than in the countenances of our equals or superiors, can we read what our own countenance expresses, and our real value as members of society.

This truth was experienced by Eugene des Essars. At home, no one but his own valet remarked that he did not look well, and that he ate nothing at the crowded and well covered table of his father; and the only person who gazed on his pale cheek with solicitude, and marked with anxious kindness his absence, his taciturnity, and the uneasiness

painted in his countenance, was Madeleine Tournon, a bed-ridden elderly woman, who had nursed his mother when she died in bringing him into the world, and had been his nurse from the day of his birth till he no longer required her attendance. But with her services did not finish his respect and affection for her, nor hers for him. Madeleine had been well educated, and was respectably born; but a thoughtless father and a bad husband had reduced her to a level with the lowest; and it was only in the service of the President des Essars that she had met with kindness mingled with respect, and had found her claims to compassion and attention fully owned and fully gratified. Consequently she esteemed the baron; and she loved, nay even adored, his son: and when, in consequence of a severe complaint, Madeleine was confined to her bed, and pronounced incapable of ever rising from it again, she declared that

she felt her calamity a blessing rather than a misfortune, because it ensured to her the pleasure of seeing her dear child Eugene des Essars every day, as he made it a point of conscience to visit her daily, in order to repay to her in some measure her active services to his father, and her tender incessant care of his own childhood.

It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that Madeleine should immediately perceive on the expressive countenance of Eugene some signs of the uneasiness which tormented him; and having expressed her anxiety in terms congenial to her warm and affectionate feelings, it is also not to be wondered at that Eugene should feel more at ease and more happy in her company, when he had once opened his heart to her and had listened to her soothings, than he did in the gay circles of Paris. Consequently, her humble roof and solitary bedside had for him more attraction than

gayer, richer scenes: and while many a lovely heiress, many a blooming maid sighed in secret for his absence, he was sitting by the couch of Madeleine, listening to her tales of other times, shifting her pillow for her, administering to her her accustomed dose of *tisane*, or unfolding to her the most secret wishes of his heart, and describing the necessary qualifications in a woman, without which he could never be happy in the married state.

Madeleine listened, approved, wondered, feared, and hoped with him; but she always ended with cautioning him against allowing himself to form an attachment to any woman who would in all probability be absolutely disapproved of by the President.

"I hope," said Eugene, one day, in answer to these cautions, "I hope that I am incapable of allowing myself to feel a passion which must be disapproved by my father. Believe me, dear Madeleine, I

should firmly set about nipping such a passion in tbe bud."

"But suppose the passion should already be full blown before you were conscious that it had even burst its green pod?"

"Impossible! I am as much aware as you are of my own liability to fall violently in love some time or other, and I should be on my guard against the approaching danger."

"Still, it is very fortunate for you, my dear child, that I have no daughter or female friend living with me, or visiting me when you do; for, if I had, you would be in great danger of liking her too well, even if she had no great attractions."

"Why so, Madeleine?"

"Because love, like some fine plants of rare quality, flourishes most in retired places. It flies the too glaring sunshine of crowded scenes, or puts forth a few

gaudy feeble flowers there, which live their little hour and then droop and die. But in retirement, and in the still shade of solitude, it strikes a deep, lasting, root; it requires no hand to plant it, no care to nourish it, no rich soil to manure it. It is the place, the situation which it delights in; and when once it has established itself there, it shoots forth into luxuriant branches, and, according to the circumstances which surround it, its flowers yield healthy fragrance or deadly poison; and they will either form the nuptial garland of the happy lover, or strew the hopeless lover's grave."

"Madeleine, how metaphorical you are!" replied Eugene, smiling: "but I believe your metaphor is just; and I also believe that love is like some weeds which, when we imagine we have rooted them out, spring up again when we least expect them. But, had you a niece, a daugh-

ter, or a friend with your mind, dear Madeleine!"

"Well; and what then?"

"Why then—why then we should make a most happy trio, that's all," added Eugene, sighing; and he and Madeleine both fell into a deep reverie.

At length Madeleine said, "My dear child, I wish you, if you please, not to visit me so soon in the evening in future. If you could come an hour later it would be more to my convenience. Could you oblige me so far?"

"I will make a point of it," replied Eugene; and they separated soon after for the evening.

But the next day Eugene forgot his promise; and having something particular to say to Madeleine, he hurried to her house even sooner than usual.

She lived in a small cottage in the Champs Elisées: and as Eugene drew

near it he saw a tall, slender woman, plainly but neatly clad, her arms gracefully folded in a long black veil, which seemed put on to screen her from observation, but which, from its peculiarity, exposed her to it the more. But proceeding onward with a slow, dignified, and graceful motion, she seemed wholly unconscious of the attention which she excited. "If her face equal her form, and if she be young," thought Eugene, "she is a beautiful creature indeed! I wonder who she is!" and he proceeded slowly to Madeleine's cottage. Madeleine started, and blushed on seeing him, and reminded him rather angrily, that he had broken his promise.

"It is very true," replied Eugene, "but I beg your pardon, and will be more obedient to-morrow." However, she was evidently disconcerted, evidently chagrined; and when he rose to depart, though earlier than he usually did, she did not offer to detain him. The

next day he meant to keep his promise exactly: but his father had formed an engagement for him which rendered it impossible; and he found he must either give up seeing Madeleine entirely, or go as early to her as he had done the preceding evening: he therefore resolved to risk her displeasure, rather than hurt her feelings by not seeing her at all in the day; and accordingly he set off on his visit full an hour before the accustomed time. He had nearly reached the gate, when he saw it open, and the lady whom he had seen the day before came out of it. Eugene immediately quickened his pace, in order to come up to her before her veil, which was, he saw, thrown back, should be pulled down again. He did so; and found that her beauty fully equalled that of her form. She appeared more than twenty, yet she was not eighteen; but early sorrow and circumstances painfully stimulating had

given an early maturity to her mind, and to her young features the deeply marked expression and character of riper years. Her cheek was pale as death, her features regular and commanding, and her large dark eyes seemed dimmed by incessant grief.

Eugene's earnest scrutinizing gaze confused the incognita, and she sought to draw down her veil in order to conceal her face from his view; but in her confusion, instead of fulfilling her intention, she did the exact contrary, and her veil fell to the ground, leaving her whole person, modestly clothed in a coarse but white garment, exposed to his eager admiration: nor could she help allowing him to stoop for her veil, and assist her in throwing it over her shoulders; while a deep blush overspread her fine features, and a sort of pensive smile stole over them as she curtsied her thanks and withdrew, which made her even more lovely in his

eyes than she had appeared before; and he stood gazing at her till she was out of sight, with his hand on Madeleine's door, unconscious of every thing but the lovely vision before him. But when it was vanished, he recollected with *rapture*, not unmixed with surprise, that she had been visiting Madeleine, and he rushed into her apartment with a flushed cheek and a beating heart.

"O, Madeleine!" cried he, "do tell me who—"

"So!" exclaimed she, sinking back on her pillow; "you need not go on: I know what you would say;—you have seen her, and all my precautions have been vain!"

"And why should I *not* see her?" cried Eugène, seizing her hand: "why did you wish to prevent me from seeing her?—why wish to deprive me of so much happiness?"

"Happiness! did you say?" cried Ma-

deleine!—"There, go—leave me—and come hither no more!"

"Madeleine, you shock and terrify me!—what do you mean?—Forbid me your house!—forbid it me, too, when—"

"Yes—when you have found out what a treasure it occasionally contains."

"Then she does visit here often, does she?"

"Often!—She and you are the comfort of my life!"

"Heaven bless her!" exclaimed Eugene, traversing the room hastily;—"but she looks good!—she looks like an angel!"

Madeleine looked at him, and sighed deeply.

"But how has it been possible, Madeleine, that you should not have mentioned her to me?—what prevented you?"

"Honour—principle:—was I, the dependent on your father's bounty, to ex-

pose his only child to the danger of forming an improper attachment?"

"Improper attachment!"

"Yes:—had my young friend rank and fortune equal to her virtues, I should have gloried in seeing you united to her; but, as it is, her very name is an eternal bar to your union; and—"

"Her *name* a bar!—Why, who is she?—For pity's sake trifle with my impatience no longer!—What is her name?"

"Constantia d'Anglade!"

"Constantia d'Anglade!—What, that poor unfortunate orphan over whose fate I have so often wept!—the daughter of that unhappy husband and that unhappy wife, so cruelly, in my opinion, and so unjustly condemned!"

"Unjustly condemned!" cried Madeleine with a scream of joy;—"and do you, then, believe them innocent?"

"I do;—nay, I always did; though my father was ever violently against them."

"Oh, my dear Constantia!" said Madeleine, shedding tears as she spoke, "how happy would you be to know that there is one human being in the world, besides the poor Madeleine, who thinks your revered parents injured and innocent!"

"Then tell her directly;—pray do, Madeleine:—and you may also tell her, that I am convinced, one day or other, the innocence of her parents will be made manifest to the world."

"My dear good child, it is the hope of that alone that has supported her under her trials."

"But tell me all you know of her; pray do."

Madeleine, in her delight at finding Eugene a friend to the injured d'Anglades, forgot all her caution, and related to him

the misery of Constantia; when, at the age of fifteen, she found herself an indigent orphan, with a name publicly disgraced, with scarcely any friend in the world, and with no resources but her own industry.

"But she had energy, she had virtue, she had piety," cried Madeleine; "and remembering that I had been the friend of her mother, in the days of our joint prosperity, and had written kindly to her in her adversity, she came to my house, and conjured me to take her under my protection, and let her board with me, while she maintained herself by embroidery, and other sort of work, assisted by the niggard bounty of a distant relation. I folded her fondly to my bosom, and I told her I would be her friend; but I also told her, that I dared not allow her to live under the same roof with me, because I knew that my protector, the President des Essars, had been

so convinced of her parents' guilt that he would be angry if I received their daughter as my companion. Besides, I had another objection to this arrangement: I looked at her, young, beautiful, innocent, and unfortunate; and I thought of *you, Eugene.*"

"Well, well; go on—you were only too prudent," he exclaimed. And Madeleine continued:—

"Constantia was disappointed; but she felt the force of my objection, and it was at length decided that she should have a small lodging, which I recommended to her, and only visit me every evening."

"And does she visit you only in an evening?"

"No;—she hates to be seen; she dreads observation; she sinks under the consciousness of being looked upon as the child of a condemned criminal; and with no human being but myself will she ever now hold converse."

"Poor Constantia!" said Eugene, with a deep sigh: "and can she maintain herself?"

"Yes:—her wants are few; the necessaries of life are all that she requires; and even out of her pittance she finds means to bring me, every now and then, a trifling present, to show her good will; for she loves me most tenderly, because I think her dear parents suffered unjustly."

"Then," exclaimed Eugene, pressing Madeleine's arm with even convulsive earnestness, "for the same reason she would love me too!—Well—but, Madeleine, dear Madeleine, what can we do for her?—what can *I* do for her?"

"Do!—you do for her?"

"Yes;—who should, if I do not?—I, the heir of thousands—I, rioting in luxuries, while she is forced to earn her daily bread—I, courted, honoured, and flattered, from the mere empty pretensions

and accident of birth and fortune;—while she, rich in beauty and virtues, is forced to hide herself from the obloquy which no crime of hers, real or supposed, can have deserved, and to hold converse with only one human being, because that one only has candour, justice, and sensibility. I can't bear it, Madeleine, I can't bear it. Nay, don't shake your head; I am not in love with mademoiselle. d'Anglade; I never shall be in love with her: she is to me an object too sacred for aught but distant respectful admiration: her wrongs and her sorrows inspire me with a sort of—of—of awe and veneration for her, wholly incompatible with a softer passion. I feel that I could almost move mountains to do her service; but, believe me, dear Madeleine, my feelings have nothing of love in them!"

And strange to say, Madeleine believed him: but he could not prevail on her to believe that it would become Constantia

d'Anglade to receive pecuniary favours from a young man.

"But, remember," said Eugene, "I have a claim on her—I believe her father and mother innocent!"

"And as that is the greatest favour you can bestow on her, so is it the *only* one which she without a blush can receive."

"Well, but you will let me see her and know her?"

"If she has no objection."

"But I am her *father's friend!*" cried Eugene; and having repeated his claims to Constantia's favour on that account a hundred times, he took his leave, resolved to watch his opportunity, and introduce himself.

The succeeding evening, when he went to Madeleine's house, he thought he should arrive there just before Constantia left her; but, as he opened the street-door, he found her on the other side

of it preparing to depart. Eugene had now the long wished-for opportunity to introduce himself; but, alas! where was his courage!—He was unable either to speak or to detain Constantia; and while, with rather a cold and forbidding stateliness, she made him a slight bow, and left the house,

"This is very strange," thought he: "to be sure Madeleine has not told her what I think of her father."

"You came rather *mal-à-propos*," said Madeleine, as spiritless and disappointed he entered, and threw himself on a seat beside her.

"Just as you attempted to open the door, which made, you know, some resistance, and consequently some noise, I was telling mademoiselle d'Anglade that I was expecting the son of the President des Essars; and I was going to inform her of your sentiments relative to her parents, when I heard you coming, and told

her I believed you were then at the door; on which she started up in great disorder, exclaiming that she hated to see or be seen by any one; but more especially she wished to avoid the son of a man who had done all he could, she knew, to procure the condemnation of her injured parents. Nor could I," added Madeleine, "detain her an instant."

This information removed Eugene's depression of spirits immediately: for he felt that, grateful as it would be to the feelings of Constantia to know that any one believed her parents innocent, it would be doubly so to find their warm defender and friend in the son of the President des Essars.

"Well—but, dear Madeleine," cried Eugene, "she will come again to-morrow, and then you will tell her every thing."

Madeleine promised compliance; and Eugene, animated with the certainty that

he should be the means of procuring a feeling of extreme satisfaction to the unfortunate Constantia, returned home in a very enviable frame of mind.

The following evening he did not set out for his accustomed visit till he thought Constantia must have been some time with Madeleine; and then he repaired to her house, with a beating heart, and full of an emotion so violent as to be almost painful. When he entered the room he saw Constantia, with her veil thrown back on her shoulders, sitting by Madeleine, and a glow of satisfaction overspreading her fine countenance, which his conscious heart told him was probably owing to him; and he was confirmed in this pleasurable idea, when Constantia arose as he approached her, bowing in respectful silence (for not a word could he utter), and smiling on him, while her eyes glistened with tears, pressed her hands gracefully on her heart, as if to

express her gratitude, and curtseyed to him with respect nearly equal to that with which he saluted her.

"I need not introduce you to each other, my dear children," cried Madeleine, while Eugene pressed her hand even with more than his usual cordiality; "for you know, Eugene, that is mademoiselle d'Anglade, and—"

"And I know," interrupted Constantia with a faltering voice, "that in this gentleman I see a man who dares to think for himself, and who adds to the penetration necessary to discover innocence, though involved in a cloud of suspicion and prejudice, the courage and the kindness to make that opinion known."

Still Eugene only bowed, and stammered out—

"Madam, you do me honour: I only did justice—I—"

But Constantia did not observe his

emotion; she was only pleasurably alive to her own.

"Sir," she continued, her full heart overflowing at her eyes, which she raised to Eugene's with an expression which penetrated to his soul, "this dear friend has been for years the only person whom I have dared to look in the face; because she, and she only, believed my revered parents innocent, and beheld me not as the child of persons infamous as well as disgraced, and as the probable sharer of their iniquity, but as the unfortunate offspring of two of the best and most injured of human beings. But, sir, there is now another of my fellow-creatures whose eyes I can presume to meet; and proud am I to say that you are that person:—you have bestowed an additional value on my almost joyless existence; and God reward you, sir, for the satisfaction which you have given to a poor, forlorn, and miserable orphan!"

"Mademoiselle," at length articulated Eugene, taking her hand and respectfully bowing on it as he spoke, "this is the happiest moment of my life!"

He said no more: but he had been sufficiently eloquent.

From this day forward Eugene and Constantia met frequently by the sick couch of Madeleine. Constantia, attributing to filial piety and gratitude alone the pleasure which she took in the society of one of the finest and most amiable youths in the world, thought it was virtue to indulge her partiality, and to seek his conversation: while Eugene, deceiving himself into a firm belief that his attention to Constantia, and the avowed pleasure which he derived from associating with her, were the results only of admiration, pity, and the justice due to oppressed innocence, contented with the present, looked not forward to the future, but divided his time and his thoughts between

the studies of his profession and the humble apartment of Madeleine. And never was there a happier trio than Madeleine's lowly room exhibited:—Constantia had obtained a new auditor to hear the tale of her father's wrongs, her mother's sufferings, and to sympathize with all the sorrow of the fair relater. She had also another sharer in her hopes of obtaining, one day, retributive justice, and of clearing from every cloud the reputation of her parents. At these moments Eugene used to seize her hand, and swear on it, that if he should be engaged in his professional career when the real culprits, for whose guilt d'Anglade had suffered, should be brought to public justice, she should have no pleader on her side more ardent than himself, or more wholly devoted to her service.

"O Madeleine!" he used to say, "what a triumph it would be to me to gain my

first renown by proving the innocence of the parents of Constantia d'Anglade!"

"And to have their innocence proved by *you* would add to my satisfaction," cried Constantia.

"And to know that their innocence was proved, and that *you* proved it, my dear child, would almost restore me to the use of my limbs again. Yes—I declare I think that I could rise and walk into the hall of justice."

"When I try this cause," exclaimed Eugene, "and when I have gained a decree in my favour—"

"I declare I believe the joy will kill me," said Madeleine.

"And me too," cried Constantia, bursting into tears; "but when—(recollection restoring her to the sad reality of the present moment)—when will this happy time come?"

"It must come, and it shall come!"

exclaimed Eugene:—"it shall, by Heaven!"

"But, alas!" replied Constantia in an agony of vain regret, "my parents will not be alive to welcome it!"

And, struck with the melancholy truth, her companions answered not.

In conversations like these, evening after evening stole rapidly away; and though neither Constantia nor Eugene, any more than Madeleine, was conscious of it, the cause that led them to the cottage, the season, the situation, and the time of their meetings, were fraught with every incitement to love, as ardent as it was rash and hopeless.

Benevolent attention to a lonely and helpless dependent was the cause of their acquaintance; while each, unconscious of the gratified whispers of self-love, admired in the other the kindness which dictated their visits to Madeleine.

The season was a warm and splendid autumn; and as Madeleine's cottage looked into a spacious garden, the sultry breeze, which fanned them through her open lattice, was laden with the delicious fragrance of the orange blossom and other odoriferous plants; while the murmur of distant fountains, and the songs of birds, disposed the mind to a sort of contemplative pensiveness favourable to tender impressions, and induced that still contented silence which the full conscious heart would not violate for worlds. The time was the hour of sun-set; and Eugene and Constantia, sitting by each other's side, used to prolong their stay by the couch of Madeleine, till the magic shade of twilight stole over the tawny foliage of the garden, and threw a deeper shade over the tall trees of the *Champs Elisées*.

The monotonous murmur of the waterfalls, the distant hum of men, and the heat

of the season, had usually by this time lulled the invalid into a temporary slumber; and Eugene and Constantia, on pretence of fearing to awaken her, used to prolong the silence so congenial to their feelings; while ever and anon an unrestrained sigh from Eugene, and a suppressed one from the bosom of Constantia, mingled with the varied sounds of evening, and harmonized only too well with the scene and its attendant circumstances. Nor did they think of departing till Madeleine awoke; and then her attendant was reluctantly summoned by Eugene to wait on Constantia home; for he was forbidden that happiness.

"I have no wealth but an unblemished reputation," Constantia used to observe; "and if a young man accompanied me to my lodging, it would be mine no longer."

This observation was too just to be ar-

gued against by Eugene—he sighed and acceded to it; but he used to follow her, apparently unobserved by her, at a respectful distance, in order to protect her from insult, should insult be offered: then he used to return home with a satisfied conscience, and thank God that he had done his duty by watching over a virtuous and unprotected orphan; while Constantia, conscious of his protection, though she chose to seem ignorant of it, used to pour out her heart in thankfulness, on her humble pillow, to that gracious Being who had raised up to her a friend so delicate, so generous, and so true.

But the delusions even of virtue cannot, ought not, to last for ever, and the truth, the unwelcome truth, soon burst on the minds of the unconscious lovers. One evening, while Constantia was conversing, as Eugene's eyes were fixed on

her animated countenance, and she had discovered that, spite of her former boast, it was no easy task to look in the face of Eugene, even though he did think her parents innocent, and had, therefore, bent her modest eyes to the ground,—the too deeply feeling orphan expatiated on the pangs which parents must feel on their death-bed, when conscious that they leave their children destitute of wealth and friends, and without the means of procuring either.

"Think," she said, "what my father and mother must have felt, when the thought of my orphan state, and my unprotected, unmitigated misery came over their minds. I witnessed my mother's agonies at the idea, and I only too well could imagine my father's:—'I leave thee, my child,' said she, 'tis true, in the protection of Heaven; but then, as in thy father's case, Heaven sometimes, for wise purposes, no doubt, allows inno-

cence to pine in sorrow and in pain; and I know not to what misery I may leave thee; with no sustenance but what you may wring from a proud, unfeeling, relation, or procure by bodily fatigue; with no friend to console or advise you; without even the most distant hope that you will ever be able to form a respectable marriage, or even any marriage at all; for what parent would allow his son to marry the daughter of the disgraced d'Anglades?"

At these words Eugene started from his seat, exclaiming "Merciful Heaven!" then rushed across the room, and, throwing himself on a chair, groaned aloud.

"Are you ill?—For pity's sake answer me!" cried Constantia, following him.

"Ill!" faltered out Eugene: "yes—I am ill indeed!—But don't alarm yourself; I shall recover presently."

He was indeed ill, but his malady was

of the mind. The words of madame d'Anglade, which Constantia had related, had wounded him to the soul; for he forcibly felt the justice of them, and the agony which they inflicted unveiled to him the real state of his heart.

She had said "no parent would allow his son to marry the daughter of the disgraced d'Anglades," and he knew that his father would spurn with indignation the idea of a connexion so degrading in the eyes of the world; while he also knew that unless he married Constantia d'Anglade, all his hopes of happiness were vanished for ever. Immediately the horror of being perhaps forced to disobey the parent whose slightest wish had been a law to him till now, and to refuse to marry the woman whom he might design for his wife, overpowered his conscious heart, and made all the dear delusions of love vanish from his eyes.

"What can I do to assist you?" cried Constantia, wringing her hands, in terror, as she gazed on Eugene's pale cheek and disordered mien. "Madeleine," added she, running up to her bed-side, "advise me what to do."

But scarcely had she said this, when she uttered a loud scream, for she beheld Madeleine lying insensible on her pillow.

Terror immediately roused Eugene from the indulgence of selfish sorrow, and he eagerly shared with Constantia the task of endeavouring to revive Madeleine: but in so doing, the tenderness which was then throbbing powerfully within his bosom, and unconsciously within that of Constantia, was perhaps increased. Each beheld the other performing, with eager zeal, the tender offices of humanity and friendship to a poor forlorn individual; and as each stretched

forth the hand in kindness to support the languid head of Madeleine, their arms became united on her pillow, and ever and anon the trembling hand of Eugene grasped the round arm of Constantia. But Madeleine at length recovered, and with her senses instantly returned her consciousness of the feelings which had occasioned her to lose them. Immediately, therefore, looking alternately at her young friends with looks of compassion and anguish, she sighed deeply, and desired them to leave her, as she wished to be alone in order to collect her scattered thoughts, and act as her conscience dictated.

Eugene suspected what she meant; but Constantia, fearing that her intellects were injured, and that she was dangerously ill, refused to go, and declared that she would watch by her all night.

"I see your friendly intention, and I understand your suspicions," replied Ma-

deleine, observing the look of alarm visible on her countenance; "but, believe me, my mind is ill at ease, for so is my conscience. I am convinced that I have acted weakly, if not wickedly, and I must consider on the means of repairing, as much as in me lies, the error which I have committed.—O my dear child!" added she, addressing Eugene, "I see, by your downcast eye, that to you my meaning needs no explanation."

Constantia was silent from surprise—Eugene from consternation; and on Madeleine's urging their departure with violent and increasing emotion, they both rose to obey her; but they found that the rain fell in torrents, and to depart was impossible. Accordingly they reseated themselves, and endeavoured, as Madeleine declared herself quite well, to resume their conversation; but they tried in vain: Constantia was embarrassed, Madeleine sad and thoughtful, and Eu-

gene seemed a prey to violent uneasiness. At length Madeleine exclaimed—

"Why do you not converse, my children?—Take advantage of the last opportunity which you will perhaps ever have of enjoyng each other's society; for here, in this house, after this moment, you will never meet again."

On hearing this strange and unwelcome declaration, both Constantia and Eugene arose, and, hastening to her bedside, demanded an explanation of it.—Constantia did so with only a remote and confused notion of the truth; but Eugene was well aware of her motives, and though he lamented he could not venture to condemn them.

"Alas!" replied Madeleine, addressing Constantia, "see you not, my child, that he, that unfortunate young man, the son of the President des Essars, has imbibed for you, the daughter of the dis-

graced d'Anglade, a passion as ardent as it is hopeless?—and one of whose existence he was not, I believe, conscious till you related your mother's dying words, and showed him that to you the happiness of a married life was for ever forbidden by the prejudices of society!"

No sooner had Madeleine uttered these words than Eugene was at Constantia's feet, alive to no consideration but the pleasure of knowing that she was informed of that ardent love, that hopeless but indelible attachment, which he now knew that he entertained for her, but from duty and timidity would not have had courage to declare to her himself.

But his joy was of short duration:—after a struggle in her own mind between the pleasure of finding herself beloved at the same moment that she had, for the first time, discovered the state of her own heart, and some counterbalancing and

painfully oppressive feelings, Constantia clasped her hands mournfully together, and exclaimed—

"Rise, sir, and insult me by that posture no longer! It is weak, it is criminal, in the son of the President des Essars, to address, in that posture, the daughter of the disgraced d'Anglade. Rise, sir, and hear the determination to which the dreadful necessity of this moment compels me."

"I will obey you," replied Eugene, "in order to prove to you my respect: but surely it is not forbidden the son of any man to love and adore the virtues of Constantia d'Anglade!"

At this moment, and before Eugene had risen from the feet of Constantia, a most unexpected and unwelcome visitor entered the apartment; and this was the President des Essars himself.

"My father!" exclaimed Eugene, rising: and Madeleine, terrified and con-

founded, hid her face on her pillow; while Constantia, though conscious of innocence, trembled as if about to incur the anger of a just judge.

"So, sir," said the President, with a forced smile, and in the tone of suppressed indignation, "the length and frequency of your visits here is accounted for! Who is this lady whose charms have shed a lustre over this humble habitation, which you cannot find in the circles befitting your rank and expectations?"

"This lady, sir," replied Eugene, with a pale cheek and a faltering voice, "is mademoiselle d'Anglade."

"D'Anglade!" answered the President in a tone of fury; "d'Anglade! —what!—the daughter of that——"

Here Constantia, restored to all her self-confidence by the dread of insult, suddenly rose, and, interrupting him, exclaimed—

"I will spare you, sir, the guilt of in-

sulting the unfortunate, by removing instantly from your presence.—Yes, sir, I am the daughter of the unhappy d'Anglade; and allow me to assure you, sir, that I am also too proud, and too conscientious, ever to see your son again, after having been convinced, as I have just been, that my meetings with him are dangerous to his peace, injurious to my own reputation, and odious to you."

So saying, she left the room; while Eugene, who was hastily following her, was forcibly and angrily withheld by his father.

"She is gone; and I may never see her more!" cried Eugene, sinking into a chair.

"Oh no," replied the President with a sneer, "your convenient friend here, your Madeleine, will no doubt contrive more meetings for you."

"There, my child," said Madeleine, "you see what my fatal blindness and

indulgence have exposed me to; but I leave my justification to you—*I* shall not attempt it. Sir (addressing the President), it is true that appearances are against me; still you might have been slower to condemn so harshly an old and faithful servant like me."

"Sir," exclaimed Eugene, "I, and I only, am to blame."

"Oh! doubtless:—it is heroic and proper that you should say so; but follow me home, sir, and there I shall expect a full though not a satisfactory explanation."

Then, without deigning even to look at Madeleine, the President withdrew; and Eugene was preparing to follow him, when Madeleine exclaimed with tears of agony—

"He is gone without speaking to me, or even looking at me, and I see that I have forfeited his favour for ever!"

"No, dear Madeleine," replied Eu-

gene, affectionately pressing her cold hand, "my father may be angry, but he can never be unjust; and if he renounces you, he must also renounce me."

So saying he departed; and endeavoured, as he slowly followed his father, to fortify his mind to endure with composure the awful interview which awaited him. But when they reached the President's hotel, unexpected company was awaiting him there, and Eugene was at liberty to retire to his own apartment, where, for the first time in his life, he ventured to violate the strict obedience which he had uniformly preserved even to his father's slightest will; and being tempted by opportunity, he sat down and wrote to Constantia in language only too expressive of the deep-rooted passion of his soul; and having finished his letter, without giving himself time to deliberate he sent it by a confidential servant to Constantia's lodgings.

That same night, when his guests were departed, the President summoned Eugene into his presence.

"Little did I expect," said the former in a mournful tone, "while I was affectionately yielding to your wishes, in not pressing you to marry because you were at present averse to marriage, that you were cruelly and clandestinely blasting all my hopes, and your own prospects in life, by forming an attachment to the artful daughter of an abject and disgraced being, and a convicted criminal!"

"Forgive me, sir," interrupted Eugene, "if I assure you that the object of my attachment is one of the most artless of human beings; and that, in my opinion, her father was unfortunate only, not criminal, and most wickedly and unjustly condemned!"

"Nay then," exclaimed the President rising with great indignation, "if

this is the case—if this child of shame has such influence over you as to make you doubt the justice of the laws of your country, and blind you to guilt the most manifest, it is time that she should be placed where her power and will to do mischief shall be rendered void; and I will go this moment to obtain a *lettre de cachet*, and have her conveyed to some place of security."

"No, sir," said Eugene, rising also, and speaking in a tone at once firm yet respectful: "no, sir, you will not do this: you will not, I am sure you will not do in a passion what you must repent in a moment of reflection. No, sir, you will not oppress the orphan who has none to aid her, and give your son reason to blush for his father!"

"Eugene!" cried the President sternly; but he reseated himself: "Eugene," repeated he, "till this unfortunate m[illegible]

I never knew you forget the respect due to me."

"True, sir; for never till this moment did I see you on the point of forgetting the respect due to yourself. O my dear father! reflect on what you were going to do! What, you!—the advocate of the poor and friendless!—you, whose name lives in the memory of so many oppressed and indigent people, rescued by your eloquence and activity from undeserved shame!—you, go to solicit a *lettre de cachet* against a helpless orphan, and merely because she has virtues, beauty, and talents, and your son has a heart to value them!—nay, has been taught by you to value them above every thing else! O, sir, the judge who condemned d'Anglade to the galleys was virtuous, compared to what you would be if you sought to confine his unhappy and friendless daughter!—He thought himself

right; but you, you know, that while you were acting thus, your own generous upright heart would instantly condemn you!"

"But this girl deserves my anger and my vengeance; for, has she not inveigled the affections of my son?—She gave the first provocation; and have I not reason to fear the further artifices and influence of that woman, who can make my son, a youth well studied too in the law of evidence, believe her parents, spite of evidence, guiltless of the crime for which they suffered?"

"But what if I was convinced of d'Anglade's innocence before I ever saw this daughter?"

"How?"

"Have you, then, quite forgotten, sir, that at the time of the condemnation I told you, like the boy in the Arabian Nights' Entertainments, had *I* been the judge, I

should have examined the count de Montgommery's servants and chaplain, as he said that he should have examined the olive-merchant's; and that I thought, if such an examination had taken place, it would have been proved that d'Anglade and his amiable wife were entirely innocent?"

"I do,—I do remember it."

"And do you not also remember, sir, that, though I failed to convince you, you were pleased to say, 'That boy has an active inquiring mind, and I think he will be an honour to me and his profession?'"

"I do remember that also," cried the President, melting into tears, and opening his arms to his son; "but, O Eugene! have I not now reason to fear that my fond foolish hopes are at length completely blasted?"

"Impossible!" replied Eugene, "impossible!—If you do but confide in me,

and do justice to the object of my love and adoration—"

"But your love for such an object is itself a crime."

"Impossible!—to love virtue is to be virtuous:—nor can you require me not to love mademoiselle d'Anglade. All you can require, or I can grant, is, a promise never to let her influence interfere with my duty; but even to endeavour, some time or other, to fulfil your wishes, and marry the object of your choice."

"And will you promise this?"

"I will immediately promise not to marry mademoiselle d'Anglade without your consent; but the other promise, till I hear from her, I do not think myself at liberty to make."

"Hear from her!—Then you own that you have written to her?"

"Yes."

"And am I to look on this voluntary

confession as a good or a bad sign ?—as a proof of obedience, or revolt ?"

" As a proof, my dear father, that I mean to be as ingenuous with you as you deserve; and that it shall not be in the power even of love itself to deprive you of that influence over your son's every action, which you have purchased by years of the most tender indulgence and affectionate care."

The President grasped Eugene's hand; but spoke not.

" Do you think that habits of affectionate and most devoted respect and unreserved confidence on my part can be broken through and destroyed at once ? Do you think that any passion, however powerful, can make me forgo those habits of ingenuousness which have, for years, made your confidence in me equal to your love ?"

" Then, wherefore, if those habits still remain, have you clandestinely met ma-

demoiselle d'Anglade at the house of Madeleine; and why did I find you at her feet?"

This question was most welcome to Eugene; he feared not to meet the inquiry, and had eagerly desired it:—then, with the boldness of conscious rectitude, and the eloquence of a virtuous mind unjustly accused, he related every circumstance as it had occurred, and at once justified himself, Madeleine, and Constantia.

When he had finished, the President, smiling through his tears, replied—

"It is well, my child: I see you are unfortunate, but that I have still reason to be proud of you. But why did you write to mademoiselle d'Anglade?"

"I wrote to calm the apparent agony of her mind, and convince her that my love was as pure and respectful as it was ardent; and then, hurried away by a torrent of irresistible feelings, I told her

that, though I knew that she, as well as myself, was too much the slave of duty to make it possible for us ever to be united, I should have a pride and a pleasure in living single for her sake, and should feel comfort in the midst of misery if she would deign to allow me to tender her this promise, and would own that such homage was not displeasing to her."

"Eugene," said the President gravely, but affectionately, "from the answer that mademoiselle d'Anglade sends to this rash offer I shall know how to estimate her real character: till then, we will drop a subject so painful to us both; and my next care shall be to convince poor Madeleine, that though I cannot acquit her of blindness and folly, I do entirely of aught that is treacherous and dishonourable."

The next day the President wrote most kindly to Madeleine, but Constantia wrote not to Eugene; and another and another

day found him anxious, disappointed, and miserable, and his father surprised and suspicious.

At length, however, a packet was given to Eugene while the President was with him, and, on opening it, he found that it contained his own letter opened, and a sealed letter directed to himself.

"This is from Constantia, sir," said Eugene, turning very pale:—"open it and read it."

"No, my son;—I require no such sacrifice."

"It is not a sacrifice;—I request this to show you the confidence I have in Constantia's principles, and to convince you that I am sure she can write nothing but what you must approve."

The President smiled half incredulously, and instantly breaking the seal, he read as follows:—

"Your letter, sir, has made me some amends for your unexpected and unwel-

come declaration to me the last time we met, as it has enabled me to make the only reparation in my power to your father, and your friends, for having excited in you an attachment at once hopeless and disgraceful; and it is the consciousness that I owe to them, and to my own character, this reparation, that emboldens me to violate those rules of propriety dearer to me than life itself, and write a long and even kind answer to a man who, forgetting that to a woman in my situation such addresses are reckoned injurious and insulting, has sent me a letter containing a passionate avowal of love.

"But, before I address you on the reparation mentioned above, sir, let me explain to you the cause of the horror which I expressed when the state of your affections was so rashly revealed to me by our misguided friend and yourself.—When I found myself a friendless, unprotected orphan—the child of disgrace as well

as poverty—and feared that every mind would be prejudiced against me, as well as every heart be shut; I resolved so to conduct myself as to live down the prejudices existing against me, and also endeavour to rescue, in a degree, the name of my injured parents from reproach, by proving, by my conduct, that they had given their child the best and most salutary principles of action; and the conclusion from this, I fondly flattered myself, would be: 'Surely it is more probable that the d'Anglades were unjustly condemned, than that persons criminal as they were should have taught their daughter to love the dictates of virtue and piety so dearly, as to make her walk through the dangers of the world with a reputation unclouded, and a virtue apparently free from stain.' These blessed hopes supported me through all my sufferings; and often, very often, have I wetted

my pillow with tears of joyful hope, while fancying that my rigid attention to my duties had at length obtained for me this desired reward.

" Judge then of my agony when I found that you, the sole heir and representative of an antient and honourable family, had conceived for me a passion fatal to your own peace, and had exposed me to the certain danger of being looked upon as an unprincipled artful girl, endeavouring to persuade a young and inexperienced man of fortune to commit the rash and disgraceful action of uniting his fate to hers!

" Instantly I saw the just frowns of your irritated father; I heard my fame for ever destroyed by the indignant suspicions and busy whispers of your relations; and all the fond hopes which had supported me with cheerfulness through my sorrows, cruelly and for ever annihi-

lated! You know what followed:—you know that I *did* see the frowns of your angry father; you also knew, perhaps, that my fame has been traduced by him and your relations: but, fortunately, you have put it in my power to defend myself, in a degree, from these attacks, and repair the involuntary fault which I have committed, and I hasten to avail myself of the power which you have given me.

"You earnestly conjure me to accept your promise of never belonging to another, as you cannot be mine, and thus I answer you:—If my miserable and undeserved calamities excite your compassion—if my peace be dear, and my reputation sacred to you—endeavour from this moment to eradicate my image from your heart; and, instead of promising never to marry, make happy your affectionate father, by promising to fulfil his

wishes, and marrying the lady whom he designs for you!—No hesitation!—Do this; and all the tenderness which a heart long since wedded to its sorrows can feel, shall to its last throbbings be yours.

"To make this task easier to you, I solemnly assure you that, till I am informed of your marriage, you shall not only never see me, but never hear of me again.—When you receive this letter I shall be removed far from you, and the place of my abode will be a secret even to Madeleine. But when you have obeyed my wishes, and, happy, envied Eugene, when you have been pressed to the bosom of an affectionate father, and been told by him that you have fulfilled his fondest wishes, and are once more the pride and comfort of his life—why then, perhaps, he and your family may speak kindly of her who used her influence over you for virtuous purposes; and I may contrive

means, consistent with propriety, to send you my blessings and my thanks.

"And now, what remains but that I should bid you a last adieu?—But think not that I find this an easy task.—No, generous Eugene! I owe you an obligation which I can forget only in the grave. You have given me the proud consciousness that, though crushed beneath a load of unmerited obloquy; though friendless, unprotected, and denied all hope of forming a virtuous connexion, and consequently liable to be the object only of vicious love, there was yet one being noble and just enough to feel for me a passion as honourable as it was ardent, to respect my misfortunes, and to endeavour to alleviate them by attentions at once gratifying to my pride and my virtue; and, above all, who had a generous pleasure in soothing the wounded feelings of an affectionate child, by pronouncing

his conviction of the innocence of her parents, and of the injustice of that sentence which had doomed them to misery and disgrace!

"Evenings of happiness (never to return again!), farewell! farewell for ever! but never shall I forget you.

"Generous Eugene! my pen still hesitates to bid you a final adieu!—but I must write it—Farewell!—And I conjure you, if your dearest pleasure be communicating pleasure to me, make the sacrifice which I require of you!—Let me carry with me wherever I go the consoling consciousness, that my esteem was of such consequence to you, that you were capable of any effort to deserve it; and that, being as jealous of my reputation as of your own, you were eager to remove the stain your love had fixed on it, by proving to your father that my influence was a virtuous influence; and that, instead

of loosening the bonds of filial piety and duty, it was my pride and my passion to strengthen and unite them still closer.

"And now, farewell for ever!

"CONSTANTIA D'ANGLADE."

It is not to be supposed that the President could read, or that Eugene could hear, this letter without many hesitations and interruptions. On the contrary, the President sometimes paused from his own emotion, but more frequently from the overpowering and phrensied emotion of his son; who, when he found that Constantia was probably gone where he should never see her more, and that her letter was indeed a final farewell, gave way to such extravagant bursts of grief that his father was alarmed both for his life and reason; but, suddenly recollecting himself, he sought the well-earned gratification of hearing his father own that he had done Constantia injustice, and that she

was all that his fondness had described her to be.

But the President was a man of the world, and a man of experience; and, though a good man, a man of prejudices. He was convinced that d'Anglade was a villain, and he felt it difficult to believe in the disinterested virtue of his daughter: therefore, struggling with his better feelings, he succeeded in convincing himself that Constantia's letter might possibly be written on purpose for his perusal, and in order to render Eugene's affections more violent, by making it appear difficult, if not impossible, for him to obtain her; and no sooner had this idea entered his head, than, proud of his own sagacity, he cherished it and delighted in it; and while following the train of ideas to which it led, he forgot that Eugene was anxiously awaiting his reply.

"You do not speak!—you do not

answer me, sir!" cried Eugene:—"Is it possible that letter can have failed of effect?"

"There is no doubt of its being written for effect."

"Sir!" exclaimed Eugene.

"I mean that it is very well written; if it be as well felt."

"If it be as well felt!"

"Yes: if mademoiselle d'Anglade be in earnest—if she is really gone, and has made it absolutely impossible that you should either hear of her or see her again, unless you fulfil the conditions which she prescribes to you—why then I shall believe that her letter is not the result of consummate art; but—"

He said no more, for the countenance of Eugene was such as to silence and to terrify him.

"I go, sir," said Eugene, fiercely approaching him, and in a voice of emotion bordering on phrensy, "I go to discover,

this instant, whether mademoiselle d'Anglade be out of my reach or not; and if she *be* within it, and her resentment of your cruel unwarrantable suspicions equals mine—why then, sir, I have no more a country here, and you no more a son."

He would have rushed out of the room; but his terrified, repentant, and self-condemned father seized him as he passed, and, falling at his feet, conjured him with an agony of tears to hear him retract what he had said, and be generous enough to forgive him.

At sight of his father in such a posture, shedding tears of penitence, and addressing him in the language of supplication, the high-raised passion of Eugene subsided, his phrensy yielded to a softer emotion, and, raising his father to his arms, he sobbed out his forgiveness on his shoulder.

When they were more calm, Eugene proposed, and the President dared

not contradict him, that they should both visit Madeleine, and learn from her whether Constantia was really gone: and Eugene also made his father promise, that if her journey had been delayed, and she was with Madeleine when they entered the room, he would not oppose his taking leave of her in any manner which his feelings should dictate.

They then set off for the house of Madeleine; while Eugene hurried thither eager to gratify his tenderness, and the President as eager to confirm his suspicions.

When they arrived, they found Madeleine so overwhelmed with affliction that she was scarcely sensible to the joy of hearing the President express himself towards her in terms of unabated affection; and at last she with difficulty informed them, that mademoiselle d'Anglade was gone she knew not whither,

and might not return for months, nor even for years.

At this entire annihilation of the faint and ill-founded hope which had hurried him like a maniac along the streets to the dwelling of Madeleine, Eugene sunk in a swoon into the arms of his father, and recovered only to rave in the delirium of fever; while the President, as he watched through many sleepless nights and restless days by the sick couch of his unconscious child, could almost have consented to purchase his recovery from death by consenting to bestow him on the daughter of the infamous d'Anglade.

But Eugene, at length, slowly and surely recovered; and with his health returned, in all their force, the prejudices of his father. As soon as Eugene was able to go out, his first visit was to Madeleine; and, at his earnest request, she

showed him Constantia's farewell letter to herself. It was as follows:—

"I am going to leave France, my best friend; and as I am unequal to endure the pang of taking a personal leave of you, I bid you farewell thus.—Believe me, that nothing but the most imperious duty could have induced me to forsake you; but I have the consolation of knowing that I leave you in excellent hands, and you shall have that of hearing, when you see me again, that I, who now bid you adieu, oppressed by languor and by unavailing regret, shall probably be invigorated by the consciousness of duties fulfilled, and by the animating whispers of hope.—I shall say no more at present; and indeed your only chance of hearing from me, or of me, during my absence, depends on your beloved Eugene: when he is married you shall receive some intelligence of me; but not till then.

"Let me, however, give you the plea-

sure of knowing, that by the death of the distant relation who has hitherto contributed to my support, I am become rich and independent; and I beg you to accept the inclosed, as a slight mark of my unalterable friendship and eternal gratitude to you: more I would send, but that there are claims on my little wealth even more sacred than yours, and I hasten to fulfil them.

"I am going into scenes of activity, anxiety, and fatigue, and shall probably be absent many months; but I court, I welcome, difficulties. I want to dissipate certain recollections. O Madeleine! little did I ever think, that any event could make the hardship of my fate appear greater in my eyes than it has always done: but I was mistaken;—and I have learnt to drink to the very dregs the bitter cup offered to my lips, by the consciousness that I am the daughter of a malefactor.

"Yet, why should I dwell on the dark side of my situation!—I have some con-

victions most clear and most soothing to my pride; and I have also the cheering consciousness, that I can lift up my heart to Heaven with the security of innocence, and the firm hope of a sincere and confiding Christian!

"Do not pity, then, my dearest friend, but love me, and pray for me; and believe me, that in sickness and in sorrow, in despondence and in hope, in adversity and in prosperity, I shall always be your affectionate and devoted child,

"CONSTANTIA D'ANGLADE."

This letter contained a bill to a considerable amount; but Madeleine declared that while Constantia was absent she should not have the heart to use it; and then, as Constantia expected she would do, Madeleine reminded Eugene that, till he was married, she could not hear any news of her absent friend.

Eugene made her no reply then, nor, indeed, at any future time when she

made the same remark; but, in about six months after the departure of Constantia, he informed his father, that he was willing to marry the lady whom he had designed for him.

"But, my dear son," cried the President, "are you sure that you can oblige me so far without any considerable effort to yourself?"

"If I did it without an effort," replied Eugene gravely, "it would be no sacrifice, no proof of my devotion to her, whom though I shall never behold, I shall never never forget; and therefore I should have less pleasure in fulfilling your wishes than I shall have now."

The President said no more: but on Eugene's solemnly assuring him that he esteemed his intended wife, and was truly grateful to her for her long attachment to him—an attachment proof even against his coldness and neglect—he presented Eugene in form to the lady and her father,

and in a few weeks after the marriage took place.

But no engagements, either of pleasure or ceremony, could lure Eugene at his stated hours from the couch of Madeleine; and in a few days after his marriage, "Well, Madeleine, have you any thing to tell me?" was his first salutation to her, and continued to be so for many days, without her being able to give him a satisfactory answer: at length, however, Madeleine, on his entrance, held out a letter to him;—it had no post-mark, and only contained these words—

"I am well—full of business and full of hopes; and, let me add, I am also full of gratitude to that kind friend who has enabled me, by following the dictates of his duty, to fulfil mine to *you*: you shall now hear of my welfare frequently. Tell monsieur Eugene des Essars *he has my blessings and my thanks.*

I can't write more at present, except that I am unalterably yours."

"Thank God, she is well, and perhaps in a way to be happy!" said Eugene, pressing the letter to his quivering lips; "and she remembers me with kindness! and she approves and is grateful for my conduct! Well, then, I ought to be contented! and I am contented!"

But the tears that would course each other down his cheek gave a denial to this assertion, and it was some minutes before he recovered his composure.

"But now, Madeleine," said he, when he had recovered his voice, "I have one more sacrifice to make. My anxiety is now removed; I have seen, in her own hand-writing, that she is well and in spirits, and that ought to content me: from this moment, therefore, show me no more of her letters; and, unless any change of importance takes place in

her situation, do not even *name* her to me. I am now the husband of another, and of one too whose only fault in my eyes can be, that she is not *Constantia d'Anglade*: and now, Madeleine, I will repeat that name *no more*—I mean, if I can possibly help it."

So saying he departed, and for many months he neither spoke of Constantia nor inquired concerning her; but, as he always knew by Madeleine's increased cheerfulness when she had heard of Constantia, he had less merit in this forbearance than he was perhaps conscious of himself.

But a fatal event at length left him at liberty to talk of Constantia, and to inquire concerning her. His wife died before they had been married a twelvemonth, in giving birth to a son, who followed its mother immediately to the grave.

"O! my dear father," cried Eugene

to the President, while they were both sitting beside the corpse of madame des Essars, "what insupportable misery should I have experienced at this moment, if my conscience did not tell me that I had done my duty by my poor Adelaide, and that she never had reason to suspect that the image of another was always triumphant over that heart where she alone ought to have reigned!"

"And was it indeed so, my son?"

"It was:—but, indeed, Adelaide was happy, quite happy; and if I deceived her—surely, surely the deceit was a pardonable one."

"But it is possible that neither time nor absence have weakened your unhappy attachment."

"It is only too true—most true," replied Eugene: "poor Madeleine always said, that if I loved at all, I should love deeply and unalterably."

"Madeleine is an old fool," said the

President, and left the room; but returning again, with every fear and every suspicion again awake now his son was a widower, he asked him whether Constantia was returned, and when he had last heard of her.

"I have neither heard nor pronounced her name, nor made a single inquiry concerning her, since the first week after my marriage. I had earned, by marrying, a right to hear of her welfare once more, and I did hear of it:—it was enough for duty—she was well, contented and satisfied with me; and she sent me, according to her promise, her blessings and her thanks: and from that time forward I forbade Madeleine to name her, and forbade myself to inquire concerning her:—for, was I not the husband of another woman?"

The President, on hearing this new proof of the rectitude of his son's principles, blushed for his late suspicions;

and while, with the mixed feelings of parental pride, of reverence for his son's virtue, and of regret that it was not in his power to reward it, he wrung his hands in violent emotion, and wiped an involuntary tear from his cheek, he secretly sighed as he thought of the self-exiled Constantia, and wished, ardently wished, that she had not been the daughter of a malefactor.

Eugene was now free again, and could, without any violation of his duty, interrogate Madeleine on the subject nearest his heart. But all he could yet learn of Constantia was—that she was well, and wrote in still unceasing spirits; but that of her projects and her speculations she still made a mystery even to Madeleine.

"She grows every day happier, it seems, then," observed Eugene with a sigh. "Well, I certainly must rejoice to hear that."

But he did not heartily rejoice;—nay,

certain it is, that Eugene was never so sad as when Madeleine showed him a letter from Constantia ending with—"and my spirits and my happiness increase daily."

Yet, in spite of this, Eugene experienced more pleasure from this long-forbidden gratification of talking of Constantia than he had known during the connexion which caused him to relinquish it. But duty, imperious duty, was again on the watch to cut off these faint and sickly blossoms of a passion at once hopeless, virtuous, and faithful.

Eugene had been a widower about ten months; when his father's health being apparently declining, and the infirmities of age gradually stealing upon him, he was continually lamenting the loss of his son's wife, who would, he said, have been so tender a nurse and so affectionate a companion to him.

"And cannot I be your nurse and your companion?" said Eugene one day,

" and as tender and affectionate as any one can be?"

" You are the best of sons, and can and will do all that a man can do on such occasions; but the gentle offices of watchful tenderness can only be completely performed by the tender assiduity, the inventive love, and unceasing watchfulness of woman. The sick-chamber is the province where women shine with unrivalled brilliancy."

" Undoubtedly, sir," replied Eugene, " and there they possess a superiority over us which they may claim with propriety, and which we may with propriety envy them. For what is more valuable or delightful than the power of alleviating the pains of sickness by incessant and inventive care, and of smoothing even the restless pillow of death itself by the tender offices of watchful fondness, the ready anticipation of each capricious wish of the sufferer, and that quick comprehension of

the meaning of the asking eye and faltering accent, which women so peculiarly possess? Happy sex!—while it is ours to destroy, it is theirs to succour and to save."

"Yes, Eugene, it is very true, as I said before, there is no nurse like a woman who loves one; therefore, though I should be pleased to have my declining age watched over by you, your poor Adelaide would have suited me still better."

"Poor madame d'Anglade was very happy in her nurse," observed Eugene with a sigh; "for her daughter united to my filial love all the essential qualities of female assiduity and skill which we have been naming. I have heard Madeleine relate such instances of the mother's sufferings, which were wholly alleviated by the ceaseless attention of her daughter!"

The President did not at all enjoy this

observation, and, with some pettishness, he replied—

"Psha! do you and Madeleine suppose there is only one good daughter in the world?—what think you of madame de Sâde?—How tenderly did she nurse her mother, not long ago, in a lingering and painful disease!—with what care did she watch over the declining health of her old and peevish husband, whom she married, as you well know, out of pique because you would not marry her, though both your father and hers were equally desirous of the alliance!"

"Is monsieur de Sâde dead?" said Eugene turning very pale.

"He is, and Julia a rich and beautiful widow.—No doubt you will call on her, Eugene; you owe such an attention to the companion of your childhood, and one who was, you know, intended for your wife."

"She never loved me, sir," replied Eugene: "it was her pride and not her tenderness that was wounded by my indifference; but my poor Adelaide really loved me, and she would never have married an old man out of pique."

"May be so; but Julia made that old man happy, and nursed him so well—O that I had but such a nurse as she is!"

Eugene instantly left the room, lest his father should speak still plainer; but he had already spoken plainly enough. Eugene understood him only too well; and he saw that his past sacrifices to duty had not been judged sufficient, but that his father wished him to become the husband of madame de Sâde.

He was not mistaken. Though the President, respecting his son's avowed constancy to his first attachment, never openly and directly urged him to address Julia, he was always hinting how happy the man would be who called her wife,

and what a nurse she had been, and was capable of being; and then he used to bewail so piteously his own situation, deprived of all female attendance, except what was purchased from dependent menials, that Eugene's regard for his own peace, and his jealousy of his lately recovered freedom, seemed on the point of vanishing before his sense of filial duty and the empire of filial affection, when, unable to bear the attacks made on him in silence, he summoned up courage to address his father on the subject, and to beg that he would cease to call forth, by hints and insinuation of his wishes, a constant struggle in his mind between the desire of obliging him and the fear of making himself miserable for life, which might in the end be as fatal to his health as it already was to his peace.

"I promise you, sir," added Eugene with violent emotion, "that I will never marry against your inclination; but, for

the sake of pity and of justice, do not urge me to marry again against my own——"

"I never *did* urge you to do so," eagerly interrupted the President.

"No—not *directly*; but *indirectly* you are continually doing it."

"Well, well—I understand you," answered the President, "and I will endeavour not only not to hint my wishes, but even not to wish at all on the subject; as your peace is dearer to me than my own. However, I suppose you have no objection to madame de Sâde's visiting *me* now and then?"

"By no means, except she expects me to be always at home to receive her."

The President in this conversation promised well, but how did he perform? His cough, his gout, and his other ailments were sure to attack him when madame de Sâde was at his house; and while he by this means gave her an op-

portunity of exerting her nursing abilities in his favour, and of consequently shining in Eugene's eyes, it at the same put it in his power to exclaim, That he believed her care and assiduity, were they his to command, would lengthen his life some years. In short, the President did not take by storm his son's resolution against marrying, but he carried it by dint of mining. He was not the torrent, sweeping away in one impetuous flood all that opposes it, but he was the slowly yet constantly falling drop, that wears away tardily, yet surely, the stone on which it falls.

"I see—I see," thought Eugene, "that he is declining fast, and let me not be forced to add to the pang of losing him, that of thinking that I refused to grant him the comforts which he desired, and which he imagined would perhaps lengthen as well as charm his existence! No—let me sacrifice myself rather than

my father!" Accordingly, he waited on madame de Sâde, who, as Eugene had reason to suspect, had not visited the President entirely on his own account.

"Julia," said he, scarcely giving her time to recover the confusion which his unexpected appearance occasioned her, "Julia, presuming on our long acquaintance, I am come to open my whole heart to you:—You know, no doubt, that my father most earnestly desires that I should solicit the honour of your hand in marriage?"

"*Your* father desires!" said Julia disdainfully.

"Yes:—and if you will condescend to accept my hand, with such a share of my heart as I can offer you, I am yours."

"A *share* of your heart, Eugene, a share only! is the rest buried in the grave of Adelaide?"

"No—it has been long possessed, and perhaps ever will be, by a living object."

"A living object?"

"Yes, but one whom I can never marry."

"And you loved her during Adelaide's lifetime?"

"O, yes."

"And still you made Adelaide happy?"

"I trust so—though she was never able to make *me* so."

"No! that was because she did not know how to manage you; such *grandes passions* are like great diseases, formidable and incurable only where the physician is timid and unskilful. Adelaide loved you too well to make herself an object of love to you. Now I do *not* love you, Eugene; I mean, not well enough to be made a fond submissive fool of by you; and therefore I should suit you better than she did. But tell me, is your enamorata young and handsome; I mean, so very, *very* handsome?" added she, stealing a look at the glass, which

reflected her own beautiful face and commanding figure to the best advantage.

"She has not your brilliancy," replied Eugene, half smiling, "for sorrow has made her cheek pale, and dimmed the lustre of her eyes: but perhaps it has given her as much attraction as it has deprived her of, for what she has lost in beauty she has gained in loveliness; at least," added Eugene, sighing deeply, "I do not wish her to be otherwise than she is."

"A most lover-like speech, indeed!" cried Julia, drawing up her head; "but who is this wonder, and where does she live?"

"Where she is, I know not; *who* she is, I do not choose that you should know; suffice, that if I become your husband, I shall never see her, hear of her, nor inquire concerning her again. I condemned myself to this strict self-denial while the husband of Adelaide, and I shall certainly not do less for you."

"You shall do a great deal more, Eugene, if you marry me," said madame de Sâde, full of the consciousness of unrivalled beauty and commanding intellect; "you shall not only learn not to see and hear of this paragon, but you shall learn not to *desire* it."

"Indeed! and who will teach me such a lesson? a lesson which at present I do not even wish to learn."

"I will:—you have piqued my pride and roused my ambition to succeed where Adelaide failed, and to rob my unknown rival of the heart which she withholds from me. My mourning will be expired in six months, and then I will be yours; and the obstacles that now oppose my conquest shall only serve to make my victory dearer."

Eugene kissed her offered hand in silence, and retired; his heart was too full to speak, for he had succeeded against his wishes and expectations: but his fa-

ther would be so rejoiced when he heard what he had done! and on that thought only could he bear to dwell. Nor did fancy in that instance surpass the reality. The President was indeed delighted when he heard this new instance of Eugene's filial piety; he laughed, he cried, he blessed him, and declared that he was *sure* Eugene's marriage with Julia would not only comfort but lengthen his life.

"God grant that it may!" cried Eugene; and then he added within himself, "If so, I shall not regret that it will probably shorten mine."

"Madeleine," said Eugene, the next day, while with a cheek paler than usual he seated himself by her bedside, "tell me all you know of Constantia—tell it me over and over again; and during the next six months let us talk of nothing else; for at the end of that time, Madeleine, we must talk of her no more, as I am going to be married again; and——"

"Married again! married again!" cried Madeleine in a tone of mournful surprise.

"It is even so," replied Eugene; and Madeleine fell weeping on her pillow.—Not that Madeleine owned to herself that she thought it was possible Eugene should ever be the husband of Constantia; still, spite of herself, a latent hope had long lurked at her heart, that the two beings whom she most fondly loved would one day or other be happy in each other. But Eugene was about to form new ties; and when she heard that he was going to marry madame de Sâde, she exclaimed with unusual acrimony, "So much the worse—I never liked her, I can't endure her, and I will trouble you to tell me no more about her."

"I will not," replied Eugene: "let us, as I said before, talk of Constantia."

"Of her!" said Madeleine, shaking her head: "Ah, poor love! Well, well,

but God's will be done! and there is an end of it."

Not long after, Eugene put into Madeleine's hands the following lines, which he had written after his return one evening from visiting the cottage, when the time of day and some other circumstances had recalled the image of Constantia even more forcibly than usual to his mind.

How dear to me the twilight hour!
It breathes, it speaks of pleasures past;
When Laura sought this humble bower,
And o'er it courtly splendours cast.

Fond fancy's friend, dim Twilight, hail!
Thou canst the absent nymph restore;
And as around thy shadows sail,
They bring the form I still adore.

Again her pensive smile I view,
Her modest eyes, soft, chasten'd fire;
And mark her cheek of tender hue
From thee a softer tint acquire.

No eye but mine, in that dim hour,
(Blest thought!) the beauteous maid could see;
And then her voice, of magic power,
Charm'd with its sweetness none but me.

But now, alas! to distant plains,
To crowded scenes perhaps she flies;
She speaks to charm unnumber'd swains,
She smiles to bless unnumber'd eyes.

Yet though before thee crowds may bow,
And thou a fav'ring ear incline,
Think not, sweet maid, their bosoms glow
With love as pure, as true as mine.

Reflect—I knelt before thy feet,
Afraid to speak, or look, or move,
Nor e'en thy pity dar'd entreat,
For hours—too sure of hopeless love—

While *they* with bold unfalt'ring tongue
Can all their boasted flame reveal.
But, Laura, spurn the heartless throng;
They talk of pangs I only *feel*.

From glowing cheeks and sparkling eyes,
O turn, my Laura, turn to him
From whose sunk cheek the colour flies,
Whose eye with hopeless love is dim.

O turn to me, whose blighted youth
The wreck of former days appears:
But well the change has prov'd my truth,
And thou wilt own that change *endears*.

Yet no, ah no; forget, forget
My ardent love, my faith, and me;
Remember not we ever met!
I would not cause one pang to thee.

And when I hear that thou art blest,
My own distress I 'll learn to scorn.
I'll bid imperious anguish rest,
While smiles my pallid lips adorn.

Deep in my heart the load of grief
Conceal'd from every glance shall lie,
Till sorrow proves its own relief,
And I shall suffer, smile, and *die*.

Madeleine's hand trembled as she perused these lines; and bursting into tears as she returned them, she exclaimed, "God grant, my child, that these verses may not be too prophetic, and that thou mayst not die in reality! for thou art indeed but the shadow of thyself."

"Those verses, my dear Madeleine," re-

plied Eugene, "were the result of feelings, which at the time of my expressing them on paper it was not criminal to indulge; but in a short time it will be my duty to struggle powerfully against them. With my own happiness I might trifle, and give way to the indulgence even of emotions fatal to my health; but when the happiness of another is in my keeping, trust me, my kind friend, that I shall exert all the vanished energy of my mind, and not allow myself to sink into the tomb the victim of hopeless, selfish sorrow."

But it is now time to return to Constantia, and explain the reasons which made her quit Paris, and indeed France, so suddenly and unexpectedly.

She had scarcely received the very large legacy of her relation, when she saw the following article in the Dutch gazette:—

"Two criminals were lately executed at Rotterdam, one of whom confessed at

the place of execution, that he committed the robbery on the count de Montgommery, for which the marquis d'Anglade was condemned to the galleys."

To describe Constantia's feelings on reading this, would be an impossible task. At length the long-promised moment seemed arriving, and she had now the means in her power of hastening its progress; for she had money enough to enable her to travel any where in pursuit of evidence of her parents' innocence; and as a first step towards it, she resolved to set off for Rotterdam immediately. "But let me first," thought Constantia, "impart my hopes to Madeleine, and through her to——" Here she paused; for she recollected, that it was possible Eugene's passion might lead him to see in her improved prospects a chance of his father's objection to their union being removed; and therefore, to prevent him from keeping alive his attachment by a hope which

she thought could never be realised, she resolved to keep her expectations concealed in her own breast; and summoning all her courage, she wrote to Madeleine and Eugene, as I have before related. "Now I trust that I have done my duty to the utmost," said Constantia to herself as she seated herself in her travelling carriage, accompanied by an old servant of her deceased relations, who had come to Paris in order to pay her the legacy; and then wiping an involuntary tear from her eye, she bade the postillion take the road to Flanders.

On her arrival at Rotterdam, she learnt with the most painful surprise, that the article in the gazette had been an entire forgery, and that no criminals whatever had, at the time mentioned, been executed in that town. Still, all hope was not lost; the person who inserted that article must have had some very urgent motive for so doing, and perhaps was *himself*

the criminal, and inserted it in order to throw an impenetrable veil over his fault; while this hope was converted almost into a certainty, by the receipt of an anonymous letter, which was sent after her into Holland, according to the address which she had left. The letter signified, that the person who wrote it, and who had written to the same effect to several persons in Paris, was on the point of hiding himself in the convent of St. Bernard for the rest of his life; but before he did so, his conscience obliged him to inform whom it might concern, that the marquis d'Anglade was entirely innocent of the robbery committed in the apartments of the count de Montgommery;—that the real perpetrators were one Vincent Belestre, the son of a tanner at Mans, and a priest named Gagnard, a native also of Mans, who had been the count's chaplain. The letter added, that a woman of the name of de la Comble could give the

most satisfactory information on the subject. (It was afterwards fully ascertained, that a letter of a similar nature had been sent to the countess of Montgommery, but that she had not had generosity enough to make it known.) On receiving this letter, Constantia resolved to return immediately to Paris; and having done so, she set a private inquiry on foot concerning Belestre and Gagnard, who had for some time before quitted the count's service.

In the mean while, Constantia determined to go to the convent of St. Bernard, in hopes of prevailing on the person who had written to her, to defer his noviciate, and assist her in bringing the criminals whom he had denounced, to justice.

In this journey, this fruitless journey as it proved, (for no such person as the letter-writer had, it appeared, ever been heard of or seen at the convent,) Constantia wasted some months; for the fatigue and

cold which she had endured completely overpowered her frame, which had been weakened by long sorrow and acute anxiety; and for a long time her life was in such danger, that the unhappy orphan saw herself, as she thought, on the point of perishing in view of that port towards which all her wishes tended; for she now, with reason, looked on the restoration of her parents' fame as an event that must certainly take place.

During Constantia's absence, her agents found out that Belestre was a consummate villain, who, on account of having been in the early part of his life engaged in an assassination, had been obliged to fly his native place; that in all the various and vicious vicissitudes of his fortune, he had been intimately acquainted and connected with Gagnard, his countryman; and that suddenly, from the lowest state of poverty, he had been known to appear in affluence, and had

even purchased an estate near Mans, for which he had paid between 9 and 10,000 livres.

Gagnard, they discovered, who was the son of a jailor at Mans, had come to Paris without either clothes or money, and had subsisted on charity, or by saying masses at the St. Esprit, when the count de Montgommery took him into his house. It was impossible that the salary which he gave him could enrich him; yet immediately after he left the count he was well clothed in his clerical dress, had plenty of money in his pocket, and kept a mistress in very elegant lodgings, on whom he bestowed the most expensive apparel.

These observations alone, had they been made in time, were sufficient to have paved the way to a discovery of the guilt of these wretches, and might have saved the life, as well as re-established the fame, of the innocent and murdered d'Anglades.

This information awaited Constantia on her return to Paris, when, having recovered sufficient strength to be able to travel, she came on the wings of hope and expectation to take decisive measures for fulfilling the eager wishes of her heart. The article in the Dutch gazette, and the anonymous letters, had already completely changed the public feeling with regard to her unhappy parents; and Constantia had the delight of finding by the journals of the day, that the Parisian world sympathized in her hopes, and was prepared to hail with pleasure the happy hour that should convert them into certainties.

As soon as she arrived, she wrote the following letter to Madeleine, who, though already apprised by Eugene of what was passing relative to the supposed innocence of the d'Anglades, could not read so joyful a letter from Constantia, the late desponding, woe-worn orphan,

without an emotion of pleasure almost too strong for her weak frame to support.

"My friend, my comforter, my second mother, I am returning to you at last, as I prophesied that I should do, full of joyful hope and expectation. Every day seems to set in a stronger light the innocence of my parents, and the guilt of the real culprits. But the sword of retributive justice is suspended over their heads, and the fame of their victims is about to be cleared from every stain. This great work accomplished, I shall have lived long enough, Madeleine, and not have lived in vain.

Yours ever faithfully,
The *happy*
CONSTANTIA D'ANGLADE."

I shall not attempt to describe the various emotions which agitated Eugene on reading this letter, and which precipitated

his steps from the cottage of Madeleine into the thickest part of the adjacent forest. Constantia, meanwhile, was closeted with her agents and her lawyers; for, as soon it was known that she had money enough to pay for services tendered and accepted, petitions to be employed in her cause crowded on her from several quarters. The great decisive blow, however, remained still unstruck; for it was not thought that there was as yet sufficient ground on which to take up Belestre and Gagnard for the robbery on the count de Montgommery: but the persons employed by Constantia kept a watchful eye on them, and at length Gagnard was discovered to have been present at a quarrel in which a man was *killed:* on this pretence, therefore, he was taken up, and committed to prison; and, providentially as it were, the very day after, a man who had been robbed by Belestre came to Paris in search of him, and, having found

him, put him immediately in the hands of the officers of justice.

This was the moment for Constantia to come forward, and the prisoners underwent an examination relative to the robbery for which the d'Anglades suffered; and having betrayed themselves by evasive and inconsistent answers, Constantia Guillemot d'Anglade was bound over to bring proofs that they were in reality the perpetrators of the crime for which her parents had been condemned to the galleys and to prison.

The return of Constantia, and the cause of it, and the evident agitation and interest which it excited in Eugene, alarmed the President considerably, especially when, one day on asking his son upon what he was so intensely thinking, he coldly replied, "I am thinking of mademoiselle d'Anglade;" and then suddenly withdrew.

Two days afterwards, the President,

while Eugene was with him, received a letter, the address of which was, as Eugene instantly saw, in Constantia's hand-writing; and pale and trembling he awaited his father's perusal of the contents. The *enveloppe* contained two letters, one of which Eugene recognised as his own letter recently written to Constantia; and he had scarcely recovered his surprise and emotion at sight of it, when the President opened and read the following letter to himself:—

"SIR,

"I HAD the honour to receive yesterday the enclosed letter from Monsieur Eugene des Essars, and I beg that you will have the goodness to dictate my answer to it, assuring you at the same time, that on this occasion I feel myself at liberty to have no will but yours. I have the honour to subscribe myself

Your obedient servant,

C. D'ANGLADE."

"Felt and written like herself!" proudly exclaimed Eugene, while the President, with a trembling hand, read his son's letter.

"MADEMOISELLE,

"AT a time when the innocence of the marquis d'Anglade and his amiable wife, though clear to you and to me, seemed incapable of being proved to others, you may remember that we indulged ourselves in fancying that the period would arrive, when the proofs which we then despaired of should be made manifest to all the world. 'Should that time arrive,' said I, 'would you accept me as your advocate, and delegate to me the welcome task of clearing your father's fame?' and you flattered me so far as to promise that you would accept my proffered services.

"Mademoiselle, the time *is* come; and I, whom some late successes of a similar nature have emboldened, now offer myself

to be your advocate, and claim your flattering promise.

"My ability you may doubt—my zeal you cannot; but zeal sometimes confers ability, and I need not tell you how sincerely and unalterably I am

"Your devoted friend and servant,

"EUGENE DES ESSARS."

"Well, sir—your answer!" cried Eugene, grasping his father's hand with trembling impatience.

"My dear Eugene," replied the President, "if I could be sure that you would be mademoiselle d'Anglade's advocate only, such is the impression which her noble conduct has made on me, that—"

"Sir," exclaimed Eugene reproachfully, "I give you my *honour* that I shall be her *avowed* advocate only; and I think, sir, you are not now to be convinced that I am incapable of violating my word and my principles."

The President felt the rebuke, and, seizing his pen, addressed Constantia in these words:

"MADEMOISELLE,

"I beg you to do my son the honour of informing him, that you accept his proffered services:—and now, allow me to make you also the tender of mine. If my experience can be of service to you, command it to the utmost, either in private or public consultations. Till now, I was convinced of your unhappy parents' guilt; but now I feel as strongly convinced of their innocence:—for it appears to me an impossibility that any parents, but such as were exemplary in their own principles and lives, could have been blessed with a daughter whose sentiments and conduct are an honour to her sex.

"Believe me, with the sincerest esteem and most grateful respect,

"Your faithful servant,

"VICTOR DES ESSARS."

"Heaven bless you for this!" said Eugene, straining his father to his heart:—"Poor Constantia, how happy will this letter make her!"

Constantia was indeed gratified by it: it gratified, as the President well knew that it would, the virtuous ambition of her soul; and having written to the son a polite acceptance of his offer, she sent the President a warm and grateful one of his.

In consequence of this she called on the latter, a few mornings after, and was ushered into an empty apartment. On the table lay a miniature picture of Eugene, in a shagreen case, and a lock of his hair beside it, as if it was going to be set with it as a present, perhaps, for his intended bride! A sick and painful feeling came across Constantia's heart as she thought of this, and, taking up the picture, she dropped a tear on it; while, hurried away by an emotion which she had never before had an opportunity of in-

dulging, she pressed his resemblance by turns to her lips and heart.

At this moment the President, unseen and unheard, approached her: but well aware what the object was on which, unconscious that she was observed, she was lavishing such fond caresses, he cautiously and kindly withdrew again; and then making a great noise to announce his reapproach, he gave Constantia time to dispel her tears, lay down the picture, and prepare for the interview.

"O poor Eugene!" thought the President, while Constantia, in all the bloom of ripened youth, turned round to meet him. The eye which he had before seen dimmed by grief, and bent to the earth by a painful and overwhelming consciousness, or turning on him the cold chilling glance of pride and desperation, now beamed on him with all the lustre of ardent hope and grateful complacency; and the pale sunk cheek of early and cease

less sorrow was now suffused with the brightest carnation, and rounded by the hand of health.

Few persons are fully aware of all their own motives of action. When the President offered his services to Constantia he thought that his motives were wholly disinterested; but he deceived himself. He was not aware that he hoped, by making himself a party in her cause, to acquire a right to be present at her interviews with his son; and now that he beheld her in all the radiance of youth and beauty, he could not help saying within himself—"It is as well, perhaps, that their meetings will take place under the restraint of my presence."

During their conversation he was called out of the room, and, before he returned to it again, his curiosity was excited to know what use Constantia would make of his absence, and whether she would again caress the picture of Eugene. Accord-

ingly he observed her from a little window in a closet adjoining, and saw her not only again gaze on the picture, but steal a small lock of the hair beside it, which she carefully concealed in her bosom.

"Poor thing," thought the President, as he re-entered the apartment, "how tenderly and truly does she love him!—and yet she desired *me* to dictate her answer to his letter! Noble-minded girl! would that thy unfortunate parents were alive to glory in a child like thee!"

The conference was short; but it left a pleasing impression of each on the mind of the other. But while Constantia felt rejoiced at being able to like the father of Eugene, the President was not at all rejoiced at seeing so much to admire in the daughter of d'Anglade; and he dreaded her increased influence over his son, when he should behold her more powerful than ever in the improved beauty of her ap-

pearance. But from that he had nothing to fear. Constantia pale and woe-worn was the object who had first interested and then captivated him; and therefore, though Eugene might rejoice in her heightened bloom and increased animation, as proofs of her recovered happiness, Constantia looking as she did when he first saw her would have been an object more dangerous to him than as she now appeared. But whether her cheek was pale or glowing, her eye bright or tearful, was a matter of indifference:—Constantia was still herself—the innocent sufferer from a father's wrongs—the intelligent companion—the pious child—the active friend, and the noble-minded virtuous woman, whose conduct had been such as to wring even from the prejudiced heart of his father the warmest tribute of admiration.

At length, in presence of the President, Constantia and Eugene had their

first meeting on business, and Eugene had prepared a friendly but reserved welcome and congratulation, with which he meant to address her; while Constantia had intended to be very civil, but rather distant. But the heart laughs at set forms, and scorns all dictates but its own :—as soon as Eugene beheld Constantia, and Constantia beheld Eugene, the studied speech was forgotten, the studied manner laid aside. Eugene said nothing, but imprinted a long long kiss on her hand; while Constantia, full of emotion, forgot in her confusion that it was she who was arrived, and not Eugene, and in faltering accents told him he was welcome to Paris.

The President meanwhile looked very grave, and began to repent that he had allowed Eugene to be the advocate in Constantia's cause; but his good feelings at length conquered his weak ones, and in an hour's time Constantia was able to state her case with some clearness,

and Eugene to answer so as to be understood.

But Eugene discovered at length, after several conferences, that he was too much taken up with the charms of his client to do her cause justice: he also found that, as an engaged man, he could not with strict honour allow himself so many opportunities of being with a woman to whom every faculty of his soul was devoted. "If I continue to see her thus," cried Eugene, "I can never marry Julia de Sâde." Immediately therefore he begged leave to associate a young counsellor of his acquaintance to his labours; and reserving his own strength for the time of the trial, he delegated to his friend the dear but dangerous occupation of meeting Constantia, and receiving her informations and instructions—while he allowed himself to join the consultations only when his presence was absolutely necessary. But it was not in his power to

keep this resolution as he at first intended: he soon thought his presence necessary much oftener than it was, and even if love had allowed him to absent himself, jealousy would not; for it was not long before he discovered that while endeavouring to preserve himself from danger, he had unconsciously insured it to his friend, who was young, noble, rich, and amiable, and whose father might not, perhaps, have any insurmountable objection to an alliance with Constantia when her parents' innocence was made known to the world.

Still, in spite of jealousy, in spite of every thing, Eugene was happy while he saw and heard Constantia; for he soon was convinced that, though Coulanges loved her, she regarded him with perfect indifference; while, though she rarely spoke to him, and never looked at him except when his eyes were averted, his penetration, quickened

by love, told him that Constantia's heart sympathized in some degree with his.

At length the time appointed for the trial arrived, and all Paris interested itself in the event. One of the principal witnesses, who had voluntarily waited on Constantia, and came forward to prove the guilt of Gagnard and Belestre, was l'abbé de Fontpierre, a man who had once belonged to the association of thieves of which Belestre was a member; and he declared himself, at the same time, to be the author of the anonymous letter to Constantia, and of the other letters of a similar nature which had been received by the countess de Montgommery and others; letters generously designed by him to rescue the name of the innocent from undeserved calumny, and lead to the discovery of guilt.

Happy would it be for society if all writers of anonymous letters were actu-

ated by motives as pure and honourable as those of this repentant sinner! But, for the most part, the pen of the anonymous letter-writer is held by a hand that would, but for the fear of the law, delight to wield the stiletto of the assassin; for in his heart lurk feelings the most terrible and depraved, while he cruelly calumniates the unoffending innocent, by accusing them, either to themselves or others, of crimes the most abhorrent to their natures, and pores over his baleful manuscript with the grin of a fiend, as he thinks that he is about to impel a poisoned arrow into the breast of those who never perhaps even in thought offended him.

But to return to the abbé de Fontpierre; who, having declared that after the death of d'Anglade his conscience reproached him with being privy to so enormous a crime, swore that he knew Belestre had obtained from Gagnard impressions

of the count's keys, in wax, by which means he had others made that opened the locks. He said, that being, soon after the condemnation of the marquis d'Anglade, in a room adjoining the one where Belestre and Gagnard were drinking together, he heard the former say to the latter, "Come, my friend, let us enjoy ourselves, while this fine fellow, this marquis d'Anglade, is at the galleys!" To which Gagnard replied, with a sigh, "Poor man! I cannot help being sorry for him; he was a good kind of man, and was always very civil and obliging to me." On which Belestre exclaimed, with a laugh, "Sorry!—what, sorry for a man who has secured us from suspicion, and made our fortunes!"

It would be tedious and unnecessary to repeat any more of the conversation held by these two wretches, and related by Fontpierre; I shall only say, that every word of it served to confirm the inno-

cence of d'Anglade, and the guilt of the prisoners.

The next witness, De la Comble, deposed that Belestre had shown her great sums of money, and a beautiful pearl necklace; and when she asked him how such riches and such pearls came into his possession, he answered, that he had won them at play.

These, and many other circumstances related by this woman, confirmed his guilt beyond a doubt: besides, in his pocket was found the Dutch gazette which led Constantia to Rotterdam, and in which, no doubt, he had himself caused to be inserted, that the men who had committed the robbery for which the marquis d'Anglade had been condemned, had been executed in Holland for another crime; hoping, probably, by this means to stop all further inquiry on the subject, should any of his confederates, in process of time, be induced to inform against him

for the manifold atrocities which he had committed.

A letter from Gagnard was also found upon him, giving him notice of the reports which had been spread through Paris by means of the anonymous letters, and desiring him to contrive some method to quiet or get rid of the abbé Fontpierre.

There was other evidence as strong against these abandoned men as what I have detailed above, but I shall not trouble my readers with it:—suffice, that the evidence against the prisoners appeared so conclusive, that they were condemned to death, and these two wretches at length terminated their existence on the scaffold.

Belestre endured the rack without divulging any thing; but he confessed all his crime before his execution, and said that this confession was only to relieve his oppressed conscience, since God alone had

seen him, and Gagnard and himself only knew what had passed.

The rack forced from Gagnard, on the contrary, a complete avowal of his criminal plans and of his crime. He even said, that if the lieutenant-criminel had interrogated him when he was on the premises where the robbery had been committed, he was so confused and alarmed that he should have confessed every thing.

There was therefore now no longer any doubt of the innocence of the marquis d'Anglade and his amiable wife; and it was decreed that Constantia should obtain letters of revision of the sentence against her deceased parents, the execution of which parliament reserved to itself.

While the real criminals were, on the clearest conviction of their guilt, condemned to death, and the innocence of the d'Anglades publicly declared and established, Constantia, with a beating heart, was awaiting the decision in a room ad-

joining the court. At length she heard a quick and well-known step, and in another moment Eugene entered to announce the condemnation of the prisoners, and the entire exculpation of her parents. But he was too agitated to speak himself, and the President, who had followed him, was obliged to speak for him.

Constantia instantly fell on her knees, and, raising her fine arms to heaven, exclaimed, "My God, I thank thee!"—Then rushing into an inner apartment, she shut herself from the sight of every one, in order to vent the agony which she experienced, even in the midst of her joy, when she reflected that her injured parents were not alive to see their honour vindicated, and their innocence proved.

Deep and bitter must that regret have been: but religious hope, and habitual resignation to the divine will, succeeded at length in calming her feelings; and

"While her eye to heaven she rais'd,
"Its silent waters sunk away."

She then returned to her expecting friends with calmness and even with smiles.

The baron de Coulanges, the father of Eugene's coadjutor in the cause, had, in the meanwhile, been informing the President that Constantia, in her endeavours to obtain justice to her parents' memory, had expended the whole of the property so lately left her, and was reduced to a state of indigence even more abject than she had known before. He was proceeding to point out the necessity there was that she should immediately sue the count, in order to obtain restitution of the sums which her father had been unjustly condemned to pay him, when Constantia re-entered the room, and with grateful earnestness thanked Coulanges and the President for their kind exertions in her favour.

She then turned to Eugene in order to thank him:—"But what shall I say to you?" she began, but her voice failed

her; the hand which she had stretched out to grasp his, fell nerveless by her side, and, unable to utter a word more, she burst into tears, and again quitted the room.

When she returned, the baron de Coulanges asked her if it was true that she had left herself entirely destitute.

"It is true," she replied; "but I welcome poverty and industry! I could endure them with cheerfulness even while I knew that I was apparently the child of disgrace; but now that I have the consciousness not only of my own but my parents' admitted innocence to support me, believe me, that riches and poverty are to me equally matters of indifference."

"Young lady," said the President, "your mind, at such a moment as this, is and must be on *stilts*, and you cannot tell yet what its natural and true height is; therefore I must venture to tell you,

that when you demand of parliament a public justification of the memory of your parents, it is your duty to bring an action for costs of suit and damages against the count de Montgommery."

"Sir," replied Constantia, "is it not true that the count, from his extravagance, is greatly involved in pecuniary difficulties?"

"It is."

"Then let the count de Montgommery know," she answered, "that I will *not* prosecute him. Tell him that the man whom he persecuted, and whose sufferings he gazed on with pleasure, taught his child to return good for evil, and to practise as well as to profess christianity."

"You are an excellent creature," replied the baron, wiping a tear from his eye, "only rather too heroic and romantic; but that will go off in time, and then we will talk further on this subject. In the

mean while, as we are now alone, at least as none are present but our friend the President and his amiable son (for Coulanges is gone off on purpose), let me prefer a suit to you, in the success of which my heart is deeply interested. Mademoiselle d'Anglade, I will not offend your modesty so far as to expatiate on your admirable conduct, in all the trials and situations in which you have been placed; but I must beg leave to say, that the proudest man in France might glory to call you daughter-in-law—assured that the exemplary child must make an exemplary wife."

Here he paused; while Eugene, anticipating what was to follow, hid his face with his hand, Constantia trembled, and the President cast his eyes on the ground.

"Now, then," continued the animated old man, "let me inform you, that my son has just declared to me that

he entertains for you the most ardent attachment; and let me say, for myself, that if you will favour him by accepting his hand, and admitting his addresses, you will be at once the pride and pleasure of his life and of mine."

Constantia listened to this honourable testimony to her virtues with modest pride, and was certainly flattered by the offer of the hand of a young man of Coulanges's rank and talents; an offer too made to her by his father, a man respected even more for his virtues than his birth. But her heart rejected the offer; and as she timidly cast her eyes on Eugene, and saw him agitated almost to fainting, she thought how easy the task of refusal was: but she felt it to be a hard task to wound the feelings of an amiable young man who loved her, and of an affectionate parent eager for the welfare of his child:—but then she knew that Eugene tremblingly awaited her answer; and gratefully, deli-

cately, but firmly, she declined the baron's proposal, and declared her fixed resolution never to be the wife of any man.

As she ended, again her eyes wandered towards Eugene, and her heart throbbed with pleasure as she beheld the instantaneous change from woe to joy which his countenance exhibited.

"Is this your final resolve?" said the baron.

"It is."

"Alas, my poor son!" said the baron; "but you will allow him to see you, and endeavour to mollify your flinty heart! or is it already too tender?"

When, seeing Constantia turn alarmingly pale, he paused, and added—

"But this is an inquiry I have no right to make:—so, Heaven bless you, young lady! and if it be not my son's lot to make you happy, may it be that of some other man!"

So saying he departed; and Constantia, eager to be alone, ordered a *fiacre*, rather than accept the President's offered carriage, and was conducted to it by him in a sort of perturbed silence on his side, and a thoughtful one on hers.

At length she was alone, and could breathe out, before the image of her Saviour, the devout and grateful offerings of her pious heart. That duty performed, she revolved over in her mind all the late interesting events which had occurred to her, and wondered that the entire success which had crowned her wishes had not made her completely happy.

She used to think, that could she but live to see her parents' fame entirely cleared, she should, after having conquered certain painful regrets, be the happiest of the happy.

"But, alas! their fame is cleared, their innocence re-established, and yet I am unhappy!"—Immediately after she caught

herself exclaiming—"Alas! now the trial is over, I shall see HIM no more!"

The next day Constantia beheld her humble door crowded with visitors:—her story and her virtue had interested, her success had delighted, and the fame of her beauty had attracted, the feeling, the benevolent, the rich, and the powerful; and to the daughter of that d'Anglade whom many of them had condemned with eagerness, and calumniated without any remorse, they were anxious to show that countenance, that interest, and that protection, which, had it been shown to her unfortunate and injured parents, might have led to a less hasty examination of the evidence of their guilt, and have induced the ministers of the law to delay their cruel sentence, till the representations of the innocent had been heard, and pronounced to be founded on justice.

But their visits were paid in vain—Con-

stantia was denied to every one; and when she saw amongst the list the names of many who had been the associates of her poor father in his prosperity, but had forsaken him in his adversity, and seemed eager to fix on him the charge for which he so unjustly suffered, she mournfully exclaimed:

"No—never shall the child of d'Anglade associate with such as these!—My father once courted, and thought himself honoured by their notice; but he has left me the sad legacy of his experience, and I will confine myself to the safe and preferable society of my equals. I will court no society but that of Madeleine—of that kind being who loved me, and did my parents justice when the world frowned on us, and who now sympathizes as sincerely in my joy as she did in my sorrow. No, dear Madeleine, henceforth I will associate with no one but thee!".

Constantia did not say, or perhaps

she was not aware, why Madeleine's society was so exclusively the object of her preference. She thought, perhaps, that gratitude only led her to love so fondly the kind-hearted invalid: she seemed not to remember that the cottage and Madeleine herself possessed a charm for her peculiar to themselves; for in the cottage she used to see Eugene, and Madeleine was his dearest friend, while the suggestions of love lurked under the seeming whispers of gratitude.

Meanwhile Eugene was even more unhappy than Constantia. He was not only to behold her no more, but he was going to enter into an engagement to live with and marry another woman!—and that too when he had reason to believe that she in a degree returned his passion.

Full of these mournful thoughts, he was sometimes on the point of throwing himself at his father's feet, and conjuring him, if he would not allow him to marry

Constantia, not to have the barbarity to insist on his marrying another: but then, the next minute, perhaps, when he heard his father cough, or complain of his increasing weakness, and earnestly wish that his daughter Julia was come home to him, his courage forsook him, and all selfish considerations were lost in the whispers of filial affection.

Eugene had not hitherto, since the trial was over, ventured to call on Madeleine, lest he should meet Constantia there—not only because he knew that the sight of her would increase his torture at the idea of his approaching marriage, but because, on pretence of wanting to speak to her on business, he had dared to follow her thither a few evenings preceding the trial, and had been forced to withdraw again immediately to avoid Constantia's anger; who told him that morning was the hour for business, and that the place in which she considered it was proper for

him to consult with her, was the *study of his father.*

Eugene, awed, piqued, yet more full of admiration of Constantia than ever, in respectful silence obeyed her commands, and departed; but, stealing a look, as he passed the window, in at the open casement, he felt comforted on beholding Constantia weeping almost convulsively on the arm of the chair on which she sat:—"She loves me," thought Eugene, "and her severity is only a proof of her virtue!"

But though he was disposed to respect the rigidness of Constantia's principles, and his own feelings, and therefore resolved not to attempt to see her alone again, or even with no other witness than Madeleine, Eugene could not endure the idea of beholding her no more before he became a husband; and therefore, in hopes of seeing her, requested his father to accompany him to Madeleine's cottage; and the President cheerfully complied.

Eugene's expectations were not de-

ceived. On entering Madeleine's apartment, they beheld Constantia, pale and dejected, sitting by the side of her friend, to whom she had been unburthening her distressed heart, and reproaching herself as an unnatural child, for not being more elated now justice was done to her parents' memory.

At sight of the President and Eugene she rose, blushing and embarrassed: nor was the latter more at ease than herself; but he was a little relieved by the diversion Madeleine gave to his thoughts, by seizing his hand, pressing it to her quivering lips, and exclaiming—

"I have heard of your eloquence, and God bless you for it, my child! for never was it exerted in a more worthy cause!"

"Never in one so dear to my heart," replied Eugene.

And Constantia thanked him by a look which worlds should not have purchased from him.

At length, being all seated by the bed-

of Madeleine, they endeavoured to enter into conversation: but they found not their thoughts at their posts; some of them were wandering over forbidden, indeed, but delightful ground. Constantia felt how dear to her was the presence of Eugene, how instantaneously his presence could dispel her cares; and Eugene, satisfied with being near her, even forgot that he must soon behold her no more, and gave himself entirely up to the enjoyment of the moment.

Madeleine was thinking what a happy, well-matched couple Eugene and her young friend would be, and how cruel and wicked it was in any one to oppose their union; while the President—(but what engrossed his thoughts, and unfitted them for leading to conversation, will appear by what follows)—"Mademoiselle," said he, gravely addressing Constantia, "I wish to know, whether, on mature reflection, you do not see reason to repent the

rash and ill-advised rejection which you gave to my friend the baron's flattering proposal."

"No, sir—I have not, nor ever can repent it," she replied eagerly, and almost indignantly; "monsieur de Coulanges is wholly indifferent to me, and ever will remain so; nor can any consideration of rank and fortune induce me to give my hand without my heart."

"Perhaps you object to the married state itself? I think you said that *you* would never marry?"

"I did say so," said Constantia, "and depend on it, sir, I shall keep my resolution."

"Then I fear, madam, I too must plead for an unfortunate in vain. I, too, have to offer you the hand of a young man, equal in birth and fortune to him whom you have rejected; but I see that you are resolved to be cruel to every one, and that my friend has no chance."

Eugene could scarcely support himself under this new trial. His father, though aware of the state of his heart, soliciting Constantia in his presence to marry another, was insupportable to his feelings: nor was Constantia less moved; but with considerable effort she replied, "To reject the love of any one who has requested and obtained the honour of your interference, sir, is particularly painful to me; but I beg you to inform your friend, that I will never marry any one,—never—never!" Here unable to restrain her emotion any longer, she leaned her head on Madeleine's pillow, and gave way to an agony of grief; while Eugene, pleased, pained, wretched, yet contented, stood gazing on her in silent fondness.

"If this be your firm resolve," said the President in a faltering voice, (who now began to believe that he had been acting foolishly, if not cruelly,) "I shall have

reason for regret, eternal and unavailing. But I am a bad pleader for a young and impassioned man; he may perhaps succeed better for himself.—Now, Eugene, try your powers of persuasion—fall at her feet, and tell her, my dear child, to have compassion on the father and son too, and make me happy in her as a daughter, and you happy in her as a wife."

Eugene, scarcely believing what he heard, yet too happy to allow himself to doubt that he heard aright, was in an instant at the feet of Constantia, who, agitated and overcome with emotion, was for a few moments insensible to all that passed; while Madeleine, terrified at her situation, declared that the President relented too late, for that the joyful surprise had certainly killed her. But Constantia had known sufficient trials, and she was reserved for recompense and happiness.

"Constantia!" cried Eugene, "must

I too plead in vain? will you indeed and in truth never be the wife of any man?"

"I will never be the wife of any man but you," she replied; and the President held her to his bosom with the affection of a father.

"But, sir," said Eugene hesitatingly, "Julia,—madame de Sâde——"

"She is acquainted with every thing, and approves every thing; your previous ingenuousness had made my task easy. And now, my children," added he, "you have nothing to look forward to, I trust, but peace and happiness: therefore, forget your past troubles; or, if you remember them, be it only to heighten by contrast your present enjoyments."

"Constantia," cried Eugene as they stole from their guests on their wedding day to pay their accustomed visit to Madeleine, "be it our boast, that

though to our duty we were long forced to sacrifice our love, it was at length given us as our reward, to be able to gratify at once both LOVE AND DUTY.*"

* It is a well-known fact that mademoiselle d'Anglade married monsieur des Essars, *conseiller au parlement.*

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

R. Taylor and Co. 38, Shoe Lane.

NOTE.

AFTER I had nearly finished this tale, I found that a celebrated writer, Mrs. CHARLOTTE SMITH, had translated the trial of D'Anglade, and published it in her Selection from the *Causes Célèbres*, called "The Romance of Real Life;" and to that interesting selection I refer my readers for the true relation of those incidents which I have occasionally altered to suit my purpose.